

# Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code:

## Self-assessment form

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	Comments – wording in policy
	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>		Housing Ombudsman definition used in policy.
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?		There are a number of instances when we will not consider a customer dispute under this policy. These are detailed in the Customer Services Policy.
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?  Evidence relied upon		Customers have the right to be heard, understood and respected. If a customer makes unreasonable demands it may be appropriate to consider if a family member, friend or support worker are able to represent the customer in the handling of their complaint. Our policy clearly sets out what we would include as unreasonable behaviour.
2	Accessibility		
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?		Complaints can be made on-line, in person, by letter, email, telephone, social media, or a third-party complaints handling website.
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?		Complaint statement and Customer Services Policy available on-line.
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?		Reasonable adjustments are included in the Customer Services Policy.
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?		Reference to the complaint process is available on website, tenant handbook, service standards, complaint statement.

<b>3</b>	<b>Complaints team and process</b>		
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?		Customer Relations Manager in post and is the lead officer for complaints.
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?		Yes low-level complaints, serious complaints are responded to by the manager responsible for the service.
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?		Yes, liaises with all departments across the group to co-ordinate the resolution of complaints and ensure responses are timely and address the issue(s) raised.
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?		There is no longer a stage 3 in the complaint process. Residents will be formally involved in the 'Help us Improve' section of the new Resident Involvement Framework, reviewing complaints and ensure learnings can be evidenced.
	Is any third stage optional for residents?		In-line with the Housing Ombudsman recommendation we have adopted a two-stage process. This can be reviewed before the resident would be referred to the Housing Ombudsman.
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?		Yes, use the Housing Ombudsman template for responses, they include text: <i>You are entitled to refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service and instructions on how to do so.</i>
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?		Yes complaints are assigned a case number and all correspondence is kept and saved as part of the case.
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?		Stage one.
<b>4</b>	<b>Communication</b>		
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?		Yes, monitoring is in place to keep in regular contact under complaint has been resolved.
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?		At each stage complainants are invited to advise us of what they would like as an outcome before we issue a final decision.
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?		100% of complaints are acknowledged and logged within three days.

	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?		Yes all letters include details of how to escalate.
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?		2019-20, 96.8% of complaints were resolved at stage one.
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?		85.7% of complaints in 2019-20 were resolved at stage 2 (6 out of 7 complaints).
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage one &amp; Stage one (with extension)</li> <li>• Stage two &amp; Stage two (with extension)</li> </ul>		100%.
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?		Yes, any extension has been related to a complicated repair / maintenance issue.
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?		Yes the Customer Relations Team have maintained contact throughout.
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction		95% satisfaction with the outcome of the complaint in 2019-20.
<b>5</b>	<b>Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service</b>		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?		Yes, received one Ombudsman investigation in 2019-20
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?		n/a
<b>6</b>	<b>Fairness in complaint handling</b>		
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?		Yes, complaints received from a third party must include authorisation from the resident.
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?		Yes we believe so.
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate?		Two.

	What was the reason for the refusal?		Both complaints had been resolved, no further action could be taken by Swan. Both cases advised to contact the Housing Ombudsman.
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?		Yes both provided with a verbal and written explanation.
<b>7</b>	<b>Outcomes and remedies</b>		
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?		Yes, all decisions to put things right are taken with the resident.
<b>8</b>	<b>Continuous learning and improvement</b>		
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?  Examples include:		<p>Changed to more flexible appointment slots</p> <p>Renew flooring in kitchen and bathrooms in all empty properties</p> <p>Replace all worktops if one part damaged</p> <p>Introduced a dedicated leaks investigator to find leaks quicker</p> <p>Replace tap washers for residents</p> <p>Provide regular updates by text or communal boards for lift breakdowns</p> <p>Gas engineers can order parts while in residents home so can advise when repair will be completed</p> <p>Introduced new scheduling tool</p> <p>Introduced live chat as instant communication method for residents</p>
	How do we share these lessons with: a) residents? b) the board/governing body? c) In the Annual Report?		Lessons learnt are reported in Home Magazine and amendments to existing reporting structures have been made to ensure lessons are reported to the Board and in the Annual Report.
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?		Yes, changes made to policy as detailed.
	What changes have we made?		<p>Adopted recommended definition of a complaint.</p> <p>Changed from three stages to two stage process.</p> <p>Included statement on 'reasonable adjustment'.</p> <p>Clarified when a concern will not be raised as a complaint.</p>