

Housing Ombudsman Self-Assessment August 2022

Section 1 Definition of a complaint	Description
Mandatory 1.3	Make it clear that customer does not need to use the word "complaint" for it to be treated as such
Mandatory 1.6	If further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter, the issue must be logged as a complaint e.g. repair repeatedly missed
Mandatory 1.9	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman
Section 2 Accessibility and awareness	Description
Mandatory 2.5	Landlords must satisfy themselves that their policy sets out how they will respond to reasonable adjustments requests in line with the Equality Act and that complaints handlers have had appropriate training to deal with such requests
Mandatory 2.6 and 2.7	Publicise policy, Complaint Handling Code and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme in leaflets, posters, newsletters, online and as part of regular correspondence with residents.
Mandatory 2.8	Early access to Housing Ombudsman Service throughout their complaint, not only when the landlord's complaints process is exhausted
Best practice 2.2	Policies should contain details of the steps that will be taken when a complaint is received via social media and how confidentiality and privacy will be maintained
Section 4 Complaint handling principles	Description
Mandatory 4.12	Complainant and if applicable, the staff member who is the subject of the complaint, is given a fair chance to set out their position and comment on any adverse findings before a final decision is made
Mandatory 4.18	Consider amending title of Dealing with Unreasonable Behaviour inc. Vexatious Complaints policy in light of the Housing Ombudsman dismissing the word vexatious
Best practice 4.3	Landlords should manage residents' expectations from the outset, being clear where a desired outcome is unreasonable or unrealistic

Best practice 4.5	Landlords should give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord where this is reasonable
Best practice 4.19	Any restrictions placed on a resident's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be appropriate to their needs and should demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act
Section 5 Complaint stages Stage 1	Description
Mandatory 5.5	A complaint response must be sent to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue, are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned expeditiously with regular updates provided to the resident.
Mandatory 5.6	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate
Best practice 5.2	If an extension beyond 20 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.
Best practice 5.3	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response.
Best practice 5.4	Where the problem is a recurring issue, the landlord should consider any older reports as part of the background to the complaint if this will help to resolve the issue for the resident.
Best practice 5.7	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these should be incorporated into the stage one response if they are relevant and the stage one response has not been issued. Where the stage one response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the
Best practice 5.14	If an extension beyond 10 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.
Best practice 5.15	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's
Section 5 Complaint stages Stage 2	Description

Mandatory 5.13	Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned with regular updates provided to the resident.
Best practice 5.2	If an extension beyond 20 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.
Best practice 5.3	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response.
Section 6 Putting things right	
Mandatory 6.6	In awarding compensation, a landlord must consider whether any statutory payments are due. If any quantifiable losses have been incurred, the time and trouble the resident has been put to as well as any distress and inconvenience caused.
Section 7 Continuous learning and improvement	
Mandatory 7.2	Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints in their annual report and more frequently to their residents, staff and scrutiny panels.
Best practice 7.3	A member of the governing body should be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This role will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight to the governing body on the landlord's complaint handling performance

Document	Lead	Action	Completed date
Policy	JB	Amend policy	
Staff guidance	JB	Amend staff staff guidance	
Staff guidance	JB	Amend staff guidance	
Document	Lead	Action	Completed date
Policy and staff guidance	JB, SS, SL	Review policy and add in link to the Reasonable Adjustments Policy Include section on reasonable adjustments in staff staff guidance Liaise with Equalities Group	
See actions	AP, DP, JB	Tenant communications e.g. rent statements, rent letters and reminders Feature in Annual Tenant Report Display on Castle House electronic signage and posters at Ollerton Local Office	
Stage 1 response template	Cust serv team leaders	Amend stage 1 response template	
Policy and staff guidance	JB	Amend policy and staff guidance	
Document	Lead	Action	Completed date
Policy and staff guidance	JB	Amend policy and staff guidance	
Policy, staff guidance and website	JB and RB	See description	
Policy, staff guidance, templates?	JB	Further work required to make this clear for both residents and staff	

Policy, staff guidance , templates?	JB	Amend policy and staff guidance and consider amending templates	
Policy, staff staff guidance and EIA	JB, RB, SS	Add Dealing with Unreasonable Behaviour Policy link to the Customer Comments Policy Complete EIA for Unreasonable Behaviour Policy	
Document	Lead	Action	Completed date
Policy and staff guidance	JB	Template letters and staff guidance to be reviewed to ensure they cover all of these points	
Staff guidance and template letters		Template letters and staff guidance to be amended to cover this	
Policy and staff guidance	JB	Amend policy and staff guidance to reflect the investigating officer will contact the complaint to seek their agreement on this extension of time	
Staff guidance	JB	Amend staff guidance	
Staff guidance	JB	Amend staff guidance	
Policy and staff guidance	JB	Amend staff guidance	
Staff guidance	JB	Amend staff guidance	
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Staff guidance	JB	Amend staff guidance	
	ACTION	Action	Completed date
	To be included in staff guidance	Approved by portfolio holder July 2022. Once ratified by Tenant Engagement Board 25 August, it will be published on the website	
		Action	Completed date
Website	NP	Consider publishing complaints reports on website	
Committee reporting	SS	Portfolio holder to update Cabinet on self- assessment and Policy and Performance Improvement Committee to receive regular update reports relating to housing complaints	

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