



Report to: Policy & Performance Improvement Committee – 1 September 2025

Director Lead: Suzanne Shead, Director – Housing, Health & Wellbeing
Deborah Johnson, Director – Customer Services & Organisational Development

Lead Officer: Jill Baker, Business Manager – Customer Services

Report Summary	
Report Title	Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment Update.
Purpose of Report	To update Members of the completion of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
Recommendations	<p>That the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) endorse the completed Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment; andb) recommend to the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee that they approve the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment and that it be published on the Council's website.

1.0 **Background**

- 1.1 The Housing Ombudsman (HO) Complaint Handling Code ("the code") sets out best practice for landlord's complaint handling procedures, to enable a positive complaints culture across all landlords within the social housing sector. The Code encourages landlord-tenant relationships so that residents can raise a complaint if things go wrong.
- 1.2 The Complaint Handling Code became statutory on 1 April 2024 which means that all members of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme are obliged by law, to follow its requirements. The Housing Ombudsman has a legal duty to ensure landlords complaint procedures and responses are compliant with the Code.
- 1.3 Part of the statutory nature of the Code means landlords are required to submit an annual submission of a self-assessment, detailing their compliance against the Code. This helps to measure performance and ensures landlords are compliant. For 2025, landlords with 1,000 homes or more are required to submit their self-assessment to the HO by 30 September 2025.

1.4 There are nine sections of the Code:

- **Definition** - what is a complaint?
- **Exclusions** – what will not be treated as a complaint
- **Accessibility** – making it easy to make a complaint- meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and offering reasonable adjustments where appropriate
- **Staff** – landlords should have a designated person or team to respond to complaints
- **Process** – sets out a clear 2 stage complaints process
- **Stages** – sets out the timescales to provide a response at both stages including the use of extensions
- **Putting things right** – considering the impact on the resident and setting out what will be done to put things right
- **Self-assessment** – landlords must complete an annual self-assessment of their compliance against the Code
- **Scrutiny** – appointing a Member Responsible for Complaints to have responsibility and accountability for complaints

2.0 Self-Assessment

- 2.1 In order to comply with the Code, the Council must complete an annual self-assessment to evidence that our policies and practices.
- 2.2 This has been completed and was reviewed by the Tenant Engagement Board on 19 June 2025. The completed self-assessment is attached as **Appendix One**.
- 2.3 The Council is complaint in all but one area. - sections 8.1 and 8.2. This is due to the timings of the Committee meetings. Once the report has received approval from the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee and has been published on the Council's website, the self-assessment will be updated and resubmitted. The Housing Ombudsman understands that Council's need to comply with the committee cycles
- 2.4 There is comprehensive staff training and guidance provided on the complaints process and dealing with complaints in general. To support this, a series of training videos are being created.
- 2.5 The involved tenants assist with the completion of the associated equality impact assessments.
- 2.6 The Housing Ombudsman self-assessment to be submitted prior to the deadline of 30 September 2025 and published on our website.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Financial Implications (FIN25-26/1727)

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. However, it is worth noting that if any maladministration is found by the Ombudsman, a financial remedy or compensation can be imposed, for which there would be no specific budget.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None