

Report to: Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee: 11 September 2025

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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	That the Governance, General Purposes & Local Government Reorganisation Committee approve: a) the completed Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self–Assessment; and b) publication of the Self-Assessment 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 their compliance against the Code. This helps to measure performance and ensure landlords are compliant. For 2025, landlords with 1,000 homes or more are required to submit their 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 compliant in all but two areas - sections 8.1 and 8.2. This is due to the timings of the Committee meetings. Once the report has received committee approval and has been published on the Council's website, the self-assessment will be updated and resubmitted to the Housing Ombudsman, prior to the 30 September deadline. Following on from this, the Council will be compliant in all areas. The Housing Ombudsman understands that Councils committee cycles do not always synchronise with their timescales.
- 2.4 The staff guidance and process is being updated and then training will be delivered to staff by attending team meetings.
- 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 recommendation's officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and 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