

The Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code- Westway Housing Association Compliance Self- Assessment

Ref. from self-assessment form	Self- assessment form required under the Code	Ass of compliance (Y/N)	Evidence of Compliance	Improvement required	Responsibility	Date Due
1.	Definition of a complaint					
1.1.	Does the complaints process following definition of a <i>An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the of service, actions, or lack of by the organisation, its own those acting on its behalf, an individual resident or group residents.</i>	Y	The Complaints and Compensation Policy and process express this and number of points, not in one definition	Action: Wording in Westway HA's Complaints, Comment and Compliment Policy to amended to reflect the Ombudsman's wording	Head of Housing	March 2021
1.2	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be	Y	Set out in the Complaints, comment and compliment Policy	Action: To review further as part of the review of the Complaints, comment Compliment Policy	Head of Housing	March 2021
2.	Accessibility					
2.1	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	Y	Complaints lodged as a result of contact from customers in writing, by telephone, email, website (my tenancy) This is recorded on CRM and dealt with by the officers	Actions: I. Assign complaints to dedicated staff members.	Customer First Team. Office Manager	March 2021
2.2	Is the Complaints Policy and	Y	Policy published online.			

	procedure online?		confirmed in training webinar that reference to 'procedure' was a terminology and they did not expect landlords to share internal procedures as long as our policy, which includes the within which the complaints process, was			
2.3	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	N	.	Action: the code requires that a policy is in place, which sets out what reasonable adjustments an organisation will make to meet the Equality Act 2010 The policy for Westway HA will be developed as a cross cutting policy to support a range of policies, including the Complaint, comment and Compliment policy Action: Complaint, comment and Compliment policy to be revised to reference new Reasonable Adjustment policy and Equality	Head of Housing	March 2021
2.4	Do we regularly advise residents about our	Y	In complaints communication, information on website and tenants newsletters.	Action: review and refine frequency of communication with	Head of Housing	March 2021

				residents; Publish our performance on a quarterly basis around complaints resolution timescales and comment on this		
3.	Complaints team and process					
3.1	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	Y	The Office manager is responsible for overseeing all complaints			
3.2	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	Y	The Complaints and Comment and compliment policy sets out roles and responsibilities to resolve complaints. Internal procedures to include limited compensation level autonomy	Action: Review current levels		
3.5	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	Y	The Complaints Comment and Compliment policy sets out roles and responsibilities to resolve effectively. This includes the ability to re-prioritise work outside the immediate complaint function			
3.4	If there is a third stage to the complaint's procedure are residents involved in the decision	N/A	We do not have a third stage			
3.5	Is any third stage optional for residents?	N/A	N/A			
3.6	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing	Y	A standard paragraph advising residents of their right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Services is included			

			responses sent to all complainants			
3.7	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident	Y	All contact and correspondence is recorded on CRM and retained in line with Westway HA's document retention policy. This also gives a trail of complaints by customer issues relating to any individual			
3.8	At what stage are most complaints resolved?	Y	The majority of complaints received are resolved at Stage 1 of the complaints process.			
4.	Communication					
4.1	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	Y	The complaint designated officer maintains contact with customers throughout the process by sending out acknowledgement, investigation and if required	Action: In line with the code develop consistent written responses for each stage	Head of Housing	March 2021
4.2	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	Y	All complainants receive a response to their complaints and are advised as to how they can escalate their complaints further in line with policy. We discuss our findings with residents before concluding and documenting our findings although this forms part of the process. Records are kept on CRM	Action: we will review Complaints Comment and Compliment Policy to allow residents the opportunity to comment on any adverse findings before a final decision is made		
4.3	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	Y	Westway HA's target is to log and acknowledge all complaints within 48 hours. In practice this is actioned at first point of contact and is therefore well within the target Where complaints are received			

			provided to the resident along with a case reference number			
4.4	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?		The Manager manages the responses to customers at each stage and records outcomes on CRM, Clear guidance on the next stage is provided to all residents at resolution of the current stage	Action: in line with the code develop consistent written response format for each stage	Head of Housing	January 2021
4.5	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?		83.33% (2019/20)			
4.6	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?		90% (2019/20) of the complaints that are escalated by the customer to stage 2 are resolved at that			
4.7	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one Stage one (with extension) • Stage two Stage two (with extension) 		2019/20 – approx. 100% is resolved within 10 days with approx. 15 days average of a life of a complaint	Action: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Better and more accurate information to be captured II. changes reporting to be able to obtain accurate data in the format required of the code III. implement new case system to capture the data 	Head of Housing	March 2021
4.8	Where timescales have been extended did, we have good reason?	Y	Where normal timeframes for obtaining information/reports from external contractors were extended due to delayed inspections.	Action: all discussions and agreements made with customers to be recorded against the individual cases in		

				CRM and any reasons for extending the case length are fully explained to the resident		
4.9	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction	Y	83% was reported in 2018/19- more current information was not collected relating to the handling of the complaints	Action: Regular surveys to be carried out to assess satisfaction with handling of their complaints	Head of Housing	March 2021
5.	Co-operation with housing Ombudsman Services					
5.1	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	Y	We will normally prioritise requests from the ombudsman, however, there have been the rare occasions when the customer has not exhausted our internal process and the Ombudsman service has referred the customer to us.	Action: Liaise with the ombudsman to ensure correspondence is electronic to a designated officer	Head of Housing	January 2021
5.2	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	Y	Generally, we do keep to timescales and update the ombudsman by telephone call and email.			

6.	Fairness in complaints					
6.1	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	Y	Residents are advised that they can ask someone to act on their behalf or if they require support to make their complaint	Action: Ensure reporting clearly shows where a representative is supporting the customer	Head of Housing	January 2021
6.2	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	Y	Complaints are responded to in plain and clear English. We avoid the use of any sector jargon and provide information in alternative formats if requested to do so.			
6.3	How many cases did we refuse to escalate? What was the reason for the refusal?	Y	None were refused			
6.4	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	N/A				
7.	Outcomes and remedies					
7.1	Where something has gone wrong are, we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	Y	Appropriate apologies are given and actions Westway HA will take are agreed with the customer in each case when things have gone wrong. All contract and outcomes are recorded on CRM	Action: Operational service areas and 'lessons learnt' reporting to teams, tenant committee to be reviewed		

8.	Continuous learning and improvement					
8.1	What improvements have we made as a result of the learning from complaints?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development and subsequent approval of the Responsive repairs Policy - Changes of main repairs contractor - Reconsideration of operational policies and procedures to ensure that complaints do not arise 	Action: case management system to evidence better record keeping. Revise Complaints & Compensation Policy		
8.2	How do we share these lessons with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) residents? b) the board/governing body? c) In the Annual Report? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Complaints outcomes, quarterly report to the tenant committee, customer newsletter, annual report b) Head of Housing reporting regularly to at Board reporting c) <u>Shared on website – Annual</u> 	Action: review and refine frequency of communication with resident	Head of Housing	2021
8.3	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	Y				
8.4	What changes have we made?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reviewed template letters to meet new code - Promotion of ombudsman services throughout any stage of the complaints process - Revised policy for compliance - We will be developing a Reasonable Adjustment Policy - Introduced a culture in the 			