

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

Self-assessment form



Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No
	<p>Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint?</p> <p><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></p>	Yes	
	<p>Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?</p>	Yes	
	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon</p> <p><i>We do not accept complaints for the following reasons:</i></p> <p><i>Please note we will respond and let you know the suitable course of action to take to the below exclusions (other than anonymous complaints where no details are left) but the following areas fall outside of the complaints policy.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Requests for a service.</i> • <i>Requests for information or an explanation of council policy or practice</i> • <i>Complaints about formal decisions taken by committees or those delegated to staff</i> • <i>Complaints about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the councils - a complaint can be made if we fail to meet the standard we set; Matters for which there is an existing right of appeal (either within the council itself or to an independent tribunal) or legal remedy;</i> • <i>Matters where there is already active or pending litigation.</i> • <i>Complaints about Councillors or co-opted Members of the council; these will be referred to the Monitoring Officer, who has a duty under the Local Government Act 2000 to deal with such matters.</i> • <i>Complaints made more than 12 months after the event unless there are exceptional circumstances as to why the complaint could not have been brought within this time</i> • <i>Complaints by staff about services provided by other staff.</i> 	Yes	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anonymous complaints will not be accepted for investigation. 		
2	Accessibility		
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	Yes	
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online? https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/The-Council/Compliments-Comments-and-Complaints/Compliments-Comments-and-Complaints-Policy-29.1.2019.pdf	Yes	
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	No	<i>We do not have a specific policy, but we ensure complaints to be made by different routes to ensure customers are able to complain to us via the phone, e-mail, online or in writing.</i>
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?		No
3	Complaints team and process		
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	Yes	
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	Yes	
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	Yes	
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?		N/A
	Is any third stage optional for residents?	N/A	
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	Yes	
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	Yes	
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?	Stage 1	
4	Communication		

	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?		In Part. <i>We provide customers with timescales as to when we will respond to complaints and will contact them if we are unclear as to the nature of the complaint.</i>
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?		No However, customers are offered a stage 2 complaint investigation.
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	Yes	
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	Yes	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?	95%	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	100%	
	<p>What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one Stage one (with extension) • Stage two Stage two (with extension) 	<p>23% 77% 100% 0</p>	Figures relate to April-September 2020.
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	Yes	
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?		<i>In part. We did inform customers on our website that complaints may be delayed during 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19.</i>

	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction?	N/A	<i>We do not measure customer satisfaction within complaints specifically at present. As If customers remain dissatisfied, they can raise a stage 2 complaint. We have noted customer satisfaction as part of our improvement activity for 21/22.</i>
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	Yes	
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	N/A	
6	Fairness in complaint handling		
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	Yes	
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	Yes	
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate? What was the reason for the refusal?	0	
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	N/A	
7	Outcomes and remedies		
	Where something has gone wrong are, we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	Yes	
8	Continuous learning and improvement		
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?		<i>We have made small improvements but are working on a series of projects for 2021/22 which are</i>

			<i>detailed in the last section of this document.</i>
	<p>How do we share these lessons with:</p> <p>a) residents?</p> <p>b) the board/governing body?</p> <p>c) In the Annual Report?</p>		<i>We are currently reviewing how we can share our lessons learnt with our tenants. We report complaints and trends through quarterly cabinet reporting and monthly internal reporting.</i>
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	Yes	
	<p>What changes have we made?</p> <p><i>There are a number of key changes we are looking to make to ensure that we use the code as complaint best practice across the organisation, alongside the LGO 'best practice guidance'</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• We are instigating a review of our complaints policy over Quarter 4, 2021. In part this work will include engaging with our customers to understand their experiences of our complaints process and satisfaction levels.</i> <i>• We are developing a training programme for those officers responsible for responding to and managing complaints</i> <i>• A further iteration of this work will ensure we provide customers with an opportunity to challenge a complaint before the final decision is taken.</i> <i>• We will introduce a satisfaction measure to ensure we understand this for all complaints handling across 2021.</i> <i>• We will ensure that all annual reporting is published on our websites.</i> <i>• We will be ensuring that our housing annual reporting contains a specific complaint focus for 2021.</i> <i>• We are creating a series of internal and external focused groups to help us to create improvement projects as a</i> 		

	<i>result of our lessons learnt and create a mechanism to share this work as part of our annual reporting.</i>		
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