

WARWICKSHIRE RURAL HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code				
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No	Action
	<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>		x	<p>The new Policy and Procedure which is under review does include this definition.</p> <p>The Policy will be approved by Board on 27th January 2021.</p>
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	x		
	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon</p>	x		<p>We consulted with our Resident Involvement Board in November 2020. 5 responses received.</p> <p>Evidence available to the Ombudsman on request.</p>
2	Accessibility			
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	x		The new policy and procedure list the channels and links. All are currently available.
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	x		The existing policy is on the website with a note saying under review. The new policy will be online by 31 st January 2021
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	x		Copy of document attached.
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?		x	<p>Included in: tenants handbook; website; annual performance.</p> <p>As per the procedure to update the webpage quarterly and promote via social media.</p> <p>Build into the newsletter/social media programme</p>

3	Complaints team and process			
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	x		Not a dedicated Complaints Officer. The responsibility for the process is covered with the remit of the Customer & Business Support Manager's role.
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	x		Compensation Policy requires review (Maintenance Manager)
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	x		
	If there is a third stage to the complaint procedure are residents involved in the decision making?		x	No third stage within our procedure. Resident involvement in Stage 2 review.
	Is any third stage optional for residents?		x	
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	x		Residents are referred to the Ombudsman for advice at all stages in the new procedures.
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	x		
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?			97% resolved at informal stage (206 informal records/213 total)
4	Communication			
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	x		Residents will be asked when reporting a formal complaint their preferred method of communication to keep them updated.
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	x		
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	x		100% within 3 working day. Complaint Manager (system) produces acknowledgement and date stamps the system
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	x		Included in standard letter – letters to be reviewed by 31/3/21
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?			71% (7 formal complaints: 5 resolved) at Stage 1
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?			50% (2 referred; 1 resolved) at Stage 2 I am awaiting Ombudsman's determination
	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) 	100% None		
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	None		
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	N/A		
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction			No currently measured. New procedures includes a satisfaction question.
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service			
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	x		
	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?	x		
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?		x	Work is being carried out on information on the website, priorities, responsibility; SLA; support and advice; and shared ownership
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate?	1		
	What was the reason for the refusal?			Refusal to provide supporting evidence for costs incurred.
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	x		
7	Outcomes and remedies			
	Where something has gone wrong are, we are taking appropriate steps to put things right?	x		Lessons learnt action plan is managed; monitored and updates will be provided to Board on a quarterly basis.
8	Continuous learning and improvement			
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documented post inspections; - Touchpoint monitoring of planned/cyclical programmes; - Actively monitoring work in progress jobs; - Confirming actions/resolutions with residents when issues have arisen; - Reviewing information on our websites;

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing a single point of contact for formal complaints - Focus on consistent and regular communication
	<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>			<p>Newsletter/social media/website</p> <p>Quarterly and Annual Board reports</p> <p>KPI and lessons learnt included in the annual report.</p>
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	x		
	What changes have we made?			<p>Increased breadth and depth of reporting to Board and residents</p> <p>Reviewed documents and procedures to focus on accessibility and support to residents.</p> <p>Swift resolution</p> <p>Training staff on preventing complaints; complaint handling and learning from complaints</p> <p>Producing Guidance for staff; managers; contractors and residents.</p>