

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form Apna Ghar HA

(December 2020)

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			
1	Definition of a complaint	YES	NO
	Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint? <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>	YES	
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	YES	
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents? All exclusions have alternative resolution pathways Complaints relating to a policy principle will result in an assessment of the 'reasonableness' of the policy principle that may result in a policy amendment. Evidence relied upon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints concerning ASB are covered by our ASB Policy • Complaints about service charges – these are covered by a separate procedure or by appeal to an external Tribunal • Complaints which involve a personal injury claim or third party liability claim – valid claims are dealt with by our insurers or Solicitors. • Complaints relating solely to a policy principle • Complaints from one resident about another (this would normally be dealt with under the ASB policy) • Requests for a service - this would only become a complaint if AGHA failed to deal with the request within specified timescales or in accordance with the service offer 	YES YES	
2	Accessibility		
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	YES	
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	YES	

	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy? - New Reasonable Adjustment Policy drafted.	YES	
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process? - In correspondence and as part of ongoing casework - A copy of the Complaints Policy is published on our website - Evidence of staff advising residents while out on estates/inspections - Via Noticeboards at schemes/blocks - To include this as a regular item in our newsletter	YES	
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 complaint's procedure are residents involved in the decision making?	NO	
	Is any third stage optional for residents?		
	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. As a very small landlord, with 298 properties, most complaints are resolved informally; with very few escalating to formal stages. In 2020, there were 3 formal complaints recorded. There were no complaints escalated to HOS in 2020 (or YTD).		
4	Communication		
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	YES	
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	YES	
	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? - Majority of complaints are resolved informally. - 66% (2 out of 3) of complaints were resolved at Stage 1	See below	

	<p>What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?</p> <p>100% year to date (1 complaint).</p>	See below	
	<p>What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one – 100% YTD Stage one (with extension) – no current extension process utilised • Stage two – NIL (1 complaint escalated to Stage 2) Stage two (with extension) –1 complaint utilised an extension 	See below	
	<p>Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?</p> <p>Review of complaints suggest delays in complaint response are generally related to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agreed action plans to be delivered, 2. Where staff cannot be interviewed immediately or 3. Where we are waiting for information from third parties, such as contractors or other agencies e.g., the Police (for ASB cases) 4. Where we are waiting for further information from a complainant. <p>Complainants are kept informed where any delays occur and new dates for a response are provided.</p>	YES	
	<p>Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?</p> <p>Evidence shows holding letters or email updates are sent to complainants to keep them updated as to any new timescales.</p>	YES	
	<p>What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction</p> <p>Not currently/formally measured. This will commence from 1 January 2021 and all formal complaints received from this date will be surveyed prior to closure.</p>	See below	
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service		
	<p>Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?</p> <p>There were no formal complaints or investigations by the HOS during 2020.</p>	YES	
	<p>Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?</p>	N/A	
6	Fairness in complaint handling		

	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout? We encourage and welcome residents who seek independent advice and support, including through representatives.	YES	
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand? Evidence indicates that advice to complaints is accurate and easy to understand and provided in plain English. A Manager will always quality check a complaint before it is sent to a resident. Any abbreviations/jargon is explained or avoided to ensure all responses are easy to understand.	YES	
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate? No complaints in 2020 were refused escalation.	NIL	
	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, where something has gone wrong, evidence indicates that actions/things are put right immediately as a result of the complaint at stage 1, for example, this may usually relate to contractor actions or repairs actions.	YES	
8	Continuous learning and improvement		
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New forms/templates introduced (e.g. providing Dehumidifiers to residents) – a signed form is now used – giving essential information to residents. - New Fire Safety posters and letters developed - Good record keeping is vital for complaints handling and providing high quality and consistent services – staff are reminded about this regularly and poor record keeping is picked up with staff. - Legal advice is sought on complex cases where there are continuing breaches of tenancy – resulting in proportionate and phased legal action, giving residents the opportunity to remediate their behaviour to avoid eviction/NOSPS - Supporting residents with painting and cleaning vouchers where they are struggling to maintain their properties in a ‘tenant like manner – 2 vouchers issued in Q3 of 20/21 - this avoids an ‘enforcement approach, and instead provides a ‘supportive approach’ to tenancy breaches 	See below	

<p>How do we share these lessons with:</p> <p>a) residents? - Via the Newsletters - In correspondence with residents where similar issues are identified</p> <p>b) the board/governing body? - Via Executive Report and regular agenda items</p> <p>c) In the Annual Report? - Not currently published - From 1 January 2021 we intend to publish “learning from complaints” as a regular item - An annual summary will be published within the annual report</p>		
<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</p>	<p>YES</p>	
<p>What changes have we made?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-draft of Complaints Policy and published on AGHA website (Nov 20) - Re-draft of internal Process (Nov 20) - Formal Reasonable Adjustments Policy and published on website (Dec 20) - Re training and clarification with staff regarding Complaints Handling (planned for January 2021) - Unacceptable Behaviour/Actions – extracts included in Complaints Policy and published on website (Nov 20) to set expectations and remind residents of their responsibilities - Unacceptable Behaviours /Actions Policy redrafted (Dec 20) - Exec Report, Self-Assessment against Code and new policy shared and approved by AGHA Board (Dec 20) 		