




# ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING DEPARTMENT COMPLAINT SELF ASSESSMENT

## Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	<p>A complaint must be defined as:</p> <p><i>‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.’</i></p>	Yes	<p><a href="#">How to make a formal complaint to Ashford Borough Council.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Find out the process to follow if you wish to make a complaint about your housing. (ashford.gov.uk)</a></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">               Action Plan for submission - Copy.doc         </div> <div style="text-align: center;">               Complaint Presentaion.pptx         </div> </div>	<p>We are currently working the Housing Ombudsman’s definition of what is a complaint as stated on our Housing webpage and currently in the process of drafting our policy along these lines.</p> <p>The new code has been presented to the Corporate Management Team and the Action Plan developed setting out timescales.</p>
1.3	<p>A resident does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord’s complaints policy.</p>	Yes	<p><a href="#">Find out the process to follow if you wish to make a complaint about your housing. (ashford.gov.uk)</a></p>	<p>We treat all expressions of dissatisfaction as a complaint and accept all complaints whether through a third party or representative.</p>
1.4	<p>Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken</p>	Yes	<p><a href="#">Find out the process to follow if you wish to make a complaint about your housing. (ashford.gov.uk)</a></p>	<p>We differentiate between a service request and a complaint. This is set out clearly on our website.</p>

	to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.			
1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	<a href="http://ashford.gov.uk">Find out the process to follow if you wish to make a complaint about your housing. (ashford.gov.uk)</a>	We accept and raise complaints even when there is an ongoing service request
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.	Yes	We do not treat dissatisfaction expressed in survey responses as complaints.	We do not treat dissatisfaction expressed in survey responses as complaints.


## Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	 Complaint Decline.docx	On the odd occasion that we do not accept a complaint we will always give a valid reason in writing to the complainant, in line with the code.
2.2	<p>A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.</li> <li>• Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.</li> </ul>	Yes	<a href="http://ashford.gov.uk">Find out the process to follow if you wish to make a complaint about your housing. (ashford.gov.uk)</a>	<p>We are currently working the Housing Ombudsman's code of guidance for defining what we consider a complaint and what is not, as stated on our Housing webpage and we are currently in the process of drafting our policy along these lines.</p> <p>This is referenced on our website page.</p>





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.</li> </ul>			
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	Yes	We are currently working the Housing Ombudsman's code of guidance for defining what we consider a complaint and what is not, as stated on our Housing webpage and we are currently in the process of drafting our policy along these lines.	We are currently working the Housing Ombudsman's code of guidance for defining what we consider a complaint and what is not, as stated on our Housing webpage and we are currently in the process of drafting our policy along these lines.
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.	No	If not deemed a relevant or appropriate complaint, we will confirm this. However, currently, the detailed explanation of how we do this is not set out in any procedure. Draft complaint policy and procedure for complaints in development.	If not deemed a relevant or appropriate complaint, we will confirm this. However, currently, the detailed explanation of how we do this is not set out in any procedure. Draft complaint policy and procedure for complaints in development.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	We are currently working the Housing Ombudsman's code of guidance for defining what we consider a complaint and what is not, as stated on our Housing webpage and we are currently in the process of drafting our policy along these lines.	We are currently working the Housing Ombudsman's code of guidance for defining what we consider a complaint and what is not, as stated on our Housing webpage and we are currently in the process of

				drafting our policy along these lines.
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### Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness



Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Partial	<a href="http://ashford.gov.uk">Find out the process to follow if you wish to make a complaint about your housing. (ashford.gov.uk)</a>	We allow tenants to make complaints using different channels. We communicate this on our website and written communication to our residents, such as Newsletters and Annual Reports.
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	 Ashford%20BC%20-%20Effectively%20ha	Staff are aware of the complaints process and have received training that they accept complaints from anyone and pass this on to Projects and Resolutions Officer.
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.	Yes	<a href="http://ashford.gov.uk">Find out the process to follow if you wish to make a complaint about your housing. (ashford.gov.uk)</a>	We actively encourage residents to submit complaints as a key learning avenue for the service. Our housing webpage evidences this.  Complaint handling and response is monitored at a senior level on regular basis

				to ensure we are learning from complaints.
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.	Partial	<a href="http://ashford.gov.uk">Find out the process to follow if you wish to make a complaint about your housing. (ashford.gov.uk)</a>	<p>We are currently working the Housing Ombudsman's code of guidance for defining what we consider a complaint and what is not, as stated on our Housing webpage and we are currently in the process of drafting our policy along these lines.</p> <p>Meanwhile our website clearly sets out the two stage process along with timescales for response, and how to escalate beyond stage two.</p>
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Partial	<a href="http://ashford.gov.uk">Find out the process to follow if you wish to make a complaint about your housing. (ashford.gov.uk)</a>	<p>We are currently working the Housing Ombudsman's code of guidance for defining what we consider a complaint and what is not, as stated on our Housing webpage and we are currently in the process of drafting our policy along these lines.</p> <p>Meanwhile our website references the Housing Ombudsman and provides a link to the new code.</p>

3.6	Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.	Yes	<a href="http://ashford.gov.uk">Find out the process to follow if you wish to make a complaint about your housing. (ashford.gov.uk)</a>	Residents have the opportunity to have a representative or third party deal with their complaints for them. This is referenced on our website page.
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.	Yes	<a href="http://ashford.gov.uk">Find out the process to follow if you wish to make a complaint about your housing. (ashford.gov.uk)</a>   Complaint%20Ackno wledge ment%20Stag wledge ment%20Stag   HRA%20Stage%201 HRA%20Stage%202 %20Response%20lett%20Response%20lett	As detailed on Acknowledgements/Response letters/deadline extension requests and website page

#### Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes	Officers responsible for complaints handling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performance and Improvement Manager</li> <li>- Projects and Housing Resolutions Officer and Resident Liaison Officer</li> </ul>	We have a senior officer who is responsible for complaints (Performance and Improvement Manager), a Projects and Housing Resolutions Officer in charge of complaint handling and a Resident Liaison Officer responsible for repair complaint handling.




4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	Yes	The Performance and Improvement Manager can deal with complaints at all levels.	We have a senior officer who is responsible for complaints (Performance and Improvement Manager) and can deal with resolutions at all levels with the authority to resolve promptly.
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively	Yes	 Ashford BC - Effectively handling h  Online Survey.pdf	<p>All staff has been trained and complaint handling is seen as a key part of the service.</p> <p>Complaint handling and response is monitored at a senior level on regular basis to ensure we are learning from complaints.</p> <p>We have moved from one person handling complaints to three responsible officers.</p> <p>We carry out surveys with residents on complaint and satisfaction</p>


### Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints	Yes	<a href="#">customer_care_policy-jan-2019.pdf</a> ( <a href="#">ashford.gov.uk</a> )	We do not treat residents any differently if they submit



	covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.			a complaint. We are currently writing a new policy which should be available in November 2024
5.2	The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.	Yes	<a href="https://www.ashford.gov.uk">Find out the process to follow if you wish to make a complaint about your housing. (ashford.gov.uk)</a>	We follow a two stage complaints process, in line with the code.
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	<a href="https://www.ashford.gov.uk">Find out the process to follow if you wish to make a complaint about your housing. (ashford.gov.uk)</a>	We follow a two stage complaints process, in line with the code.
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.	Yes	This will be reflected in the new policy	We handle all complaints relating to contractors and partners through our own complaints process, to ensure that there is only one process.  This will be reflected in the new policy.
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	This will be reflected in the new policy.	We handle all complaints relating to contractors and partners through our own complaints process, to ensure that there is only one process.


				This will be reflected in the new policy.
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as “the complaint definition”. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	Yes	  Complaint%20Ackno wledge ment%20Stag wledge ment%20Stag	Our templates clearly set out what our understanding of the complaint is.
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Partial		This is done in practice when we respond, we will ensure that the acknowledgement correspondence clarifies this when needed.
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;</li> <li>b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position;</li> <li>c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and</li> <li>d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.</li> </ul>	Yes	 Ashford BC - Effectively handling h	This is done as standard practice. Training by HQN carried out to reinforce the expectations of the code.
5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in	No		Currently we advise residents where we may fall



	this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.			outside of the timescale to respond. Will ensure this is clarified at acknowledgement stage and the resident's agreement sought.
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	Yes	<a href="#">Accessibility Statement for Ashford Borough Council.</a>	Our website informs residents that we will make reasonable adjustments in line with residents' requirements.
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.	Yes	 HRA%20Stage%201 %20Response%20lett <a href="#">Find out the process to follow if you wish to make a complaint about your housing. (ashford.gov.uk)</a>	All stage one complaints are escalated to stage two upon request. All stage one letters state this.
5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.	Yes	Complaints tracker	A full record of all complaints is kept. The complaints tracker holds all the different stages of the complaint and outcomes, while all relevant documentation is kept on a shared drive.





5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.	Yes	Standard practice	We ensure that complaints can be resolved at any stage of the complaints process – before a formal complaint is put in or during the handling of the complaint, without a need for escalation.
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	Yes	<a href="http://ashford.gov.uk/customer_care_policy-jan-2019.pdf">customer_care_policy-jan-2019.pdf (ashford.gov.uk)</a>	This is captured in our Customer Care Policy. Actions relating to unacceptable behaviour to be broadened on review of the Policy.
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes		We have not had to restrict anyone on the basis of unacceptable behaviour. This will be reflected in the new policy.

## Section 6: Complaints Stages

### Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible,	Yes	 Acknowledgement% 20Response.docx	Most complaints are resolved promptly with an



	and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.			apology if appropriate or explanation and resolution.
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <b><u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u></b>	Yes	Complaints tracker	All complaints are acknowledged within five days, usually on the same day as receipt of the complaint.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <b><u>within 10 working days</u></b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Complaints tracker	We have a deadline of responding to all stage one complaints within ten working days of the acknowledgement.
6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	 HRA%20Extension%20Letter.doc	Currently we advise residents where we may fall outside of the timescale to respond.
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	 HRA%20Extension%20Letter.doc	We always inform residents of the contact details for the Housing Ombudsman when informing them about an extension.

6.6	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	 HRA%20Stage%201 %20Response%20lett	We provide responses to complaints with an outline of when outstanding actions will be carried out and track the actions to make sure that they are done.
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	 HRA%20Stage%201 %20Response%20lett	We address all key points raised within a complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, including referral to any relevant policy or legislation where appropriate.
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	 Complaint%20Element%20Addition.docx	<p>Where a resident makes additional complaints during an investigation and the issues are related we incorporate into the stage one response.</p> <p>Where unrelated we would raise a new stage one complaint.</p>
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the complaint stage;</li> <li>b. the complaint definition;</li> </ul>	Yes	 HRA%20Stage%201 %20Response%20lett	All of this is confirmed in writing and captured in our response templates.




	<p>c. the decision on the complaint;</p> <p>d. the reasons for any decisions made;</p> <p>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</p> <p>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</p> <p>g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.</p>			
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## Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	<a href="http://ashford.gov.uk">Find out the process to follow if you wish to make a complaint about your housing. (ashford.gov.uk)</a>	This is set out in our procedures on our Housing website page
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	Complaint tracker	All complaints are acknowledged within five days, usually on the same day as receipt of the complaint.
6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	<a href="http://ashford.gov.uk">Find out the process to follow if you wish to make a complaint about your housing. (ashford.gov.uk)</a>	We address all key points raised within a complaint at stage 2 and will conduct a thorough investigation with all relevant parties to clarify and set out appropriate resolutions.

6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	<a href="http://ashford.gov.uk">Find out the process to follow if you wish to make a complaint about your housing. (ashford.gov.uk)</a>	We ensure that the person considering the complaint at stage two is not the same person who considered the complaint at stage one, and will be more senior to the person who considered it at stage one.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <b>within 20 working days</b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Complaints tracker	We have a deadline of responding to all stage two complaints within twenty working days of the acknowledgement.
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	 Complaint%20Acknowledge%20Stage	Currently we advise residents where we may fall outside of the timescale to respond.
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	 Complaint%20Acknowledge%20Stage	We always inform residents of the contact details for the Housing Ombudsman when informing them about an extension.
6.17	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address	Yes		We provide responses to complaints with an outline of when outstanding actions will be carried out and track



	the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.			the actions to make sure that they are done.
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	 HRA%20Stage%202 %20Response%20lett	We address all key points raised within a complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, including referral to any relevant policy or legislation where appropriate.
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the complaint stage;</li> <li>b. the complaint definition;</li> <li>c. the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>d. the reasons for any decisions made;</li> <li>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</li> <li>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</li> <li>g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.</li> </ul>	Yes	 HRA%20Stage%202 %20Response%20lett	We address all key points raised within a complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, including referral to any relevant policy or legislation where appropriate.
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	 HRA%20Stage%202 %20Response%20lett	We ensure that all stage two responses are comprehensive and address all points and different

				issues raised across the relevant departments.
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## Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	<p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apologising;</li> <li>• Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;</li> <li>• Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;</li> <li>• Taking action if there has been delay;</li> <li>• Reconsidering or changing a decision;</li> <li>• Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;</li> <li>• Providing a financial remedy;</li> <li>• Changing policies, procedures or practices.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>This will be covered in our new policy and associated processes – go back to others were examples put in and replace.</p>	<p>We acknowledge and apologise where it has been identified that there has been failings on our part and how we will put these things right.</p>
7.2	<p>Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.</p>	Yes	<p>Remedies offered as per the Housing Ombudsman Remedies Guidance Document</p>	<p>Remedies offered as per the Housing Ombudsman Remedies Guidance Document</p>

7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	Remedies offered as per the Housing Ombudsman Remedies Guidance Document	Remedies offered as per the Housing Ombudsman Remedies Guidance Document
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	Remedies offered as per the Housing Ombudsman Remedies Guidance Document	Remedies offered as per the Housing Ombudsman Remedies Guidance Document

### Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.</li> <li>b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept;</li> <li>c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;</li> <li>d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;</li> </ul>	Yes	Standards Committee Meeting report January 2024	Currently complaints performance and analysis is reported the corporate Management Team and also to the Standards Committee.

	<p>e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and</p> <p>f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.</p>			
8.2	<p>The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.</p>	Yes	<p>Standards Committee Meeting report January 2024</p>  <p>Public%20minutes%20Public%20reports%202030th-Jan-2024%20pack%2030th-Jan-21</p>	<p>Currently complaints performance and analysis is reported the corporate Management Team and also to the Standards Committee.</p>
8.3	<p>Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.</p>	N/A		<p>There has been no significant structure, merger or change in procedure.</p>
8.4	<p>Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.</p>	N/A		<p>This would be done if required.</p>
8.5	<p>If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.</p>	N/A		<p>This will be done if required</p>

## Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	Complaints Tracker	Learning from complaints and service improvement form part of the Housing Management Team meeting.
9.2	A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	Yes	Complaints Tracker	Learning from complaints and service improvement form part of the Housing Management Team meeting.
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	Partial	<a href="#">Performance Information and figures for the Ashford Borough Council Housing Annual Report 2022-23</a>	Residents are informed of complaints performance in the Tenants Annual Report. There is further work to be done to make this a more integral part of tenant engagement and Member Committees.
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Yes	The Deputy Chief Executive Officer for the Council is the accountable person for complaints handling.	The Deputy Chief Executive Officer for the Council is the accountable person for complaints handling.

9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').	Yes	Portfolio holder for Housing.	Portfolio holder for Housing is the MRC.
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Partial		Currently, regular reports are provided to the Council's Management Team. Currently looking at providing regular reports to the Portfolio Holder for Housing.
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;</li> <li>b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;</li> <li>c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and</li> <li>d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.</li> </ul>	No		The current complaint report is in the process of being broken down into areas of housing complaints so that learning can be more targeted and responsive to residents' needs.

9.8	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to: a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.	Yes	Looking to formalise this in our new policy.	We currently work across departments to handle and resolve complaints. This goes beyond Housing as there is a lot of corporate link up in the handling of complaints. A no-blame culture of transparency, collective responsibility and collaboration underlies our approach. This will be formalised in the new policy.
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