

## Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code				Notes
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>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>		<p>Our definition expands on this. Our complaints definition is as follows:</p> <p><i>For the purposes of this policy, and in line with the definition provided by the Local Government &amp; Social Care &amp; the Housing Ombudsman Services, a complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction, however expressed, about a council service (whether that service is provided directly by the council or by a contractor or partner), which affects an individual or group of individuals that requires a response.</i></p> <p><i>A complaint may be about:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Where we, or our contractors, have failed to deliver a service to an acceptable standard</i></li> <li>• <i>There has been a delay in providing a service, or we have not kept you informed of progress when providing a service</i></li> <li>• <i>We have not rectified or acted upon a request for a service to be provided</i></li> <li>• <i>Our staff or contractors have behaved in an unfair, discourteous or discriminatory manner</i></li> </ul>

	<p>Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p>Exclusions are as follows:</p> <p><i>There are some instances where an expression of dissatisfaction will not be treated as a complaint under the council's complaints policy. Examples of these are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Where there is an existing right of appeal, either within the Council or externally (e.g. Benefits Tribunal, Planning Inquiry). It is important to note that any fault in the way the Council acted (which wouldn't be considered as part of a formal appeal or review process) will be recorded and responded to as a complaint</i></li> <li>• <i>Where the Council has taken legal action that it has a duty to perform, such as recovery of Council Tax or Enforcement action</i></li> <li>• <i>A request for compensation only</i></li> <li>• <i>When there is a formal legal claim against the Council or legal dispute</i></li> <li>• <i>When the matter is being dealt with through the Council's Insurers</i></li> <li>• <i>Disagreement with a Council policy or legislation decision that the Council is applying when delivering a service</i></li> <li>• <i>An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision</i></li> <li>• <i>A request for a service to be provided (for example reporting a missed refuse collection or a tree which needs cutting back; these tell us about work we need to do but may subsequently be</i></li> </ul>

				<i>treated as a complaint if we don't deal with the request)</i>
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?  Evidence relied upon	<b>Yes</b>		Exclusions re complaint with the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code.
<b>2</b>	<b>Accessibility</b>			
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	<b>Yes</b>		Yes, although this is not stated in the Complaints procedure. However, complaints can be made on an eform, by letter, by email, by telephone and in person.  The complaints procedure refers to an eform and this is currently under review.
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	<b>Yes</b>		
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?		<b>No</b>	We do not have documented reasonable adjustments policy. However, when customers request assistance to make a complaint this is provided, e.g. a complaint can be taken verbally and transcribed in to written form.  Our complaints policy states:  You can use our <u>online form</u> to make your complaint. You can also make a complaint by email, telephone, visiting the Town Hall or by writing to us.  The Council is committed to ensuring the way we work does not place people who require assistance at a disadvantage when accessing our services. We will consider each request individually, aiming to agree and

				provide appropriate reasonable adjustments when they are needed.
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	<b>Yes</b>		
<b>3</b>	<b>Complaints team and process</b>			
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?		<b>No</b>	There is no specific complaints officer. There is a complaints team who administer complaints and forward to the appropriate officer to investigate and respond. Stage one complaints are responded to by the appropriate manager within the area of the business that the complaint relates to and Stage 2 complaints are reviewed and responded to by head of service.
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	<b>Yes</b>		
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	<b>Yes</b>		
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?		<b>No</b>	
	Is any third stage optional for residents?		<b>N/A</b>	
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	<b>Yes</b>		
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	<b>Yes</b>		
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?			Most complaints are resolved at stage 1.

<b>4</b>	<b>Communication</b>			
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	<b>Yes</b>		
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	<b>Yes</b>		This happens when it is appropriate.
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	<b>Yes</b>		
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	<b>Yes</b>		
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?			94%
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?			6%
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage one</li> <li>• Stage one (with extension)</li> <li>• Stage two</li> <li>• Stage two (with extension)</li> </ul>	<b>71%</b>		71%  100%
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	<b>Yes</b>		
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	<b>Yes</b>		
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction			50% of complaints have an outcome of upheld or partly upheld.
<b>5</b>	<b>Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service</b>			

	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?		<b>No</b>	
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	<b>Yes</b>		
<b>6</b>	<b>Fairness in complaint handling</b>			
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	<b>Yes</b>		
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	<b>Yes</b>		Yes in the vast majority of cases.
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate?  What was the reason for the refusal?	<b>None</b>		
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	<b>N/A</b>		
<b>7</b>	<b>Outcomes and remedies</b>			
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	<b>Yes</b>		
<b>8</b>	<b>Continuous learning and improvement</b>			
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?			This is published in Crawley Homes annual report. A selection of learning and improvements are detailed below.
	How do we share these lessons with:  a) residents?  b) the board/governing body?			A summary of complaints is detailed in Crawley Homes annual report which is sent to residents. Complaints are also reviewed at Crawley Homes Senior Management Team, and also at the Portfolio briefing, and complaints data is also shared on the members information bulletin.

	c) In the Annual Report?			
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	<b>No</b>		
	What changes have we made?			We have reviewed our complaints policy in light of the self-assessment and have included reasonable adjustments within the policy and have also changed our policy to state that complaints can be made using a number of different channels.

Learning & Improvement data from most recent data available for month of July 2020.

Partly Upheld as weather conditions then lockdown meant the work was delayed and the scaffolding was in place for longer than anticipated. There would have been a cost to taking down and reassembling so it was decided to leave in place during the delays.

**STAFF TRAINING**

Contractor needs to collect all rubbish & leave it tidy.

**IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CONTRACTOR & CUSTOMER**

ensure that the booking system for sub contractors works! Wates are currently improving their system to prevent reoccurrence.

**IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CONTRACTOR & CUSTOMER**

To update leaseholders, private tenants re. non access issues.

**IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CONTRACTOR & CUSTOMER**

Miscommunication - the op attended and did not have the information to contact the customer. This showed as a "No Access". Relaying of information has been addressed with the contractor/controller.

**IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CONTRACTOR & CUSTOMER**

Tenant was not kept informed about the situation. We need to focus on communication with Tenants.

**SERVICE IMPROVEMENT IDENTIFIED**

System error - caseworker contacted incorrect person (relative). Raised issue with IT Department so future amendments to contact details can be updated to the Housing Mgt files and the ASB files at the same time

**STAFF TRAINING/ADVICE**

Officer training/knowledge has been identified & shared with the officer concerned and line manager.

**IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CONTRACTOR & CUSTOMER**

Members of staff acknowledge & apologies for their mistake. Will be mindful when booking weekend appointments. IT been updated to configuration in booking gas engineers out of hours.

#### STAFF TRAINING/SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

Contractor needs to ensure that any jobs that were cancelled from COVID are being booked back in and are not on a holding date.