

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

Our self-assessment: 19 February 2021

| Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code | | Yes | No |
|---|---|-----|-----|
| 1 | Definition of a complaint | | |
| | Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint? 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. | ✓ | |
| | Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered? | | ✗ |
| | Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents? Evidence relied upon | n/a | n/a |
| 2 | Accessibility | | |
| | Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint? | ✓ | |
| | Is the complaints policy and procedure available online? | ✓ | |
| | Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy? | ✓ | |
| | Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process? | ✓ | |
| 3 | Complaints team and process | | |
| | Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post? | ✓ | |
| | Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints? | ✓ | |
| | Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes? | ✓ | |
| | If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure, are residents involved in the decision making? | | ✗ |
| | 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? | ✓ | |
| | Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident? | ✓ | |
| | At what stage are most complaints resolved? Stage 2 in the formal complaints process. However, we aim to achieve 90% of enquiries dealt with in the feedback and feedback with investigation stages before a complaint enters the formal process. | | |

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| 4 | Communication | | |
| | Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process? | ✓ | |
| | Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision? | ✓ | |
| | Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days? | ✓ | |
| | Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage? | ✓ | |
| | What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one? 3 cases (4%) | | |
| | What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two? 4 cases (6%) | | |
| | What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage one: 3 cases (100%) Stage one (with extension): 1 case (100%) Stage two: 4 cases (100%) Stage two (with extension): 1 case (100%) | | |
| | Where timescales have been extended, did we have good reason? | ✓ | |
| | Where timescales have been extended, did we keep the resident informed? | ✓ | |
| | What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction? 28% STAR T survey results (ending 31 December 2020) | | |
| 5 | Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service | | |
| | Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days? | ✓ | |
| | 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? | ✓ | |
| | If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand? | ✓ | |
| | How many cases did we refuse to escalate? None What was the reason for the refusal? | | ✗ |
| | 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? | ✓ | |
| 8 | Continuous learning and improvement | | |
| | What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints? See below | | |
| | How do we share these lessons with: a) Residents? b) The board/governing body? c) In the Annual Report? See below | | |
| | Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints? | ✓ | |
| | What changes have we made? See below | | |

Section 8

What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?

- As a result of a complaint, we have changed our processes to ensure we send proactive communications to customers to keep them informed if there are going to be ongoing delays to heating installations.
- Following a complaint from a customer about the length of time to fix a broken boiler, which required attendance from one of our contractors, we have introduced a named contact within Cottsway and our Contractor to be informed directly if these types of issues are raised in this particular block of flats to ensure orders are completed within set timescales.
- Over the Christmas period a number of customers reported dissatisfaction with the service they had received from the out of hours contact centre provider. Following feedback to our supplier, further training has been given to call handlers managing out of hours calls to ensure that our service levels remain consistent to customers whenever they need to contact Cottsway during the evenings and weekends.

How do we share these lessons with:

a) Residents?

Complainant contacted directly, website updates, Customer Insight Group-reviews learning outcomes and themes.

b) The board/governing body?

Board representation on complaint reviews, two board members review various complaints that Cottsway have received at different stages of the complaints process with the Operations Director, Head of Housing and the Customer Service Manager.

c) Annual Report?

Complaints data is provided in the Annual reports and the quarterly executive business report.

What changes have we made?

- Having recently adopted the new Housing Ombudsman Complaint code we are keen to make sure we understand the reasons for dissatisfaction with the complaints process, we are therefore undertaking an independent review following feedback in our recent STAR survey results, to better understand how to improve our service offering.