

# Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self Assessment Form

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code

Definition of a complaint	Yes	No	Comments
<p><b>Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint?</b></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>*Within the current Complaints Policy, our definition of a complaint is not expressed using this exact wording, however the intention is very much in line with the definition provided by the Housing Ombudsman.</p>
<p><b>Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?</b></p>	√		

Definition of a complaint	Yes	No	Comments
<p><b>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</b></p>			<p><b>Evidence relied upon:</b></p> <p>The complaints policy states that where a customer has commenced legal action in relation to a complaint, this will not be progressed through the Association's complaints process. This is to ensure that the complainant does not have to deal with two separate processes for the same complaint and also ensures that the position of the Association is not compromised in relation to any legal action being taken.</p> <p>The policy also allows for complaints to be treated outside of the complaints process where the customer makes regular complaints. This is to allow the Association to carry out investigations into why this is happening and hopefully be able to address the issues that are causing the complainant to regularly make complaints.</p>

Accessibility	Yes	No	Comments
<p><b>Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?</b></p>	√		
<p><b>Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?</b></p>	√		
<p><b>Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?</b></p>	√		
<p><b>Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?</b></p>		√	

Complaints team and process	Yes	No	Comments
<b>Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?</b>		√	Complainants are told who will be dealing with their complaint.
<b>Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?</b>		N/A	The person dealing with the complaint has the autonomy to resolve the complaint.
<b>Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?</b>		N/A	The person dealing with the complaint has authority to involve other departments in resolving disputes.
<b>If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?</b>		N/A	
<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>	√		
<b>Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?</b>	√		
<b>At what stage are most complaints resolved?</b>			Most of the complaints received are resolved at the early informal stage 0 or at stage one, the first formal stage of the complaints process.

Communication	Yes	No	Comments
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?			<p>In 2019/20, 64% of complaints were resolved at stage one and 36% of complaints resolved at stage 0.</p> <p>The stages at which complaints are resolved are monitored on a quarterly basis.</p>
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?			<p>In 2019/20, only two complaints representing 0.5% of complaints received were resolved at stage two.</p>
<p>What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage one</li> <li>• Stage one (with extension)</li> </ul>			<p>Leeds Federated's timescales for responding to complaints are different to that of the Code making a direct comparison difficult.</p> <p>In 2019/20, 220 out of the 238 (92%) complaints at stage one have been resolved within the set timescale of 7 working days plus 5 working days where the complainant has requested that their complaint is escalated to stage two.</p>

Communication	Yes	No	Comments
<p><b>What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage two</li> <li>• Stage two (with extension)</li> </ul>			<p>Stage two complaints should be responded to within 7 working days of the request being made under the current policy and procedure.</p> <p>In 2019/20, two complaints were escalated to stage 2 and one was responded to outside of the 7 working days timescale.</p>
<p><b>Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?</b></p>	√		
<p><b>Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?</b></p>	√		
<p><b>What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction?</b></p>			<p>The most recent satisfaction survey results for quarter 2, 2020/21 show that satisfaction with how complaints were dealt with was 68.5%. Prior to 2020/21, satisfaction with complaint handling had maintained a general trend of over 70% for the previous 3 years.</p>

Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service	Yes	No	Comments
<p><b>Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?</b></p>	√		
<p><b>Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?</b></p>	√		

Fairness in complaint handling	Yes	No	Comments
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?			Unfortunately we are unable to provide this information due to the way in which we currently hold our complaints data.
What was the reason for the refusal?			N/A
Did we explain our decision to the resident?			N/A

Outcomes and remedies	Yes	No	Comments
Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	√		

Continuous learning and improvement	Yes	No	Comments
<p><b>What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?</b></p>			<p><b>The following are examples of changes that have been made as a direct result of customer complaints:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to documentation of property shortlisting</li> <li>• A review of standard letters used to contact next of kin when a tenant is deceased</li> <li>• Technical improvements to the My Account system, resolving faults and a potential data security issue identified by a customer</li> <li>• Additional checks by our Clerk of Works prior to the handover of new homes</li> <li>• Clearer information for tenants on property boundaries and garden maintenance responsibilities in the case of new homes</li> <li>• Clearer advice to new tenants on the use of non-habitable basement areas for storage of belongings</li> <li>• New policy on the maintenance of fixtures and fittings provided in s.106 homes that do not accord with our standard specification</li> <li>• Dismissal of a subcontractor as a result of unacceptable behaviour</li> <li>• Additional message added to the telephone system to advise customers of longer waiting times as a result of increased calls related to Covid-19</li> <li>• New income management process put in place to recover utility arrears from customers</li> </ul>

Continuous learning and improvement	Yes	No	Comments
<p><b>How do we share these lessons with:</b></p> <p><b>a) residents?</b></p> <p><b>b) the board/governing body?</b></p> <p><b>c) In the Annual Report?</b></p>			<p><b>a) residents</b></p> <p>A quarterly trend analysis report on complaints is presented to the Challenger Panel whose role it is to scrutinise Leeds Federated's performance from a customer perspective and make recommendations about how performance might be improved. The report provides details of the complaints resolved at the various stages and any learning points stemming from complaints.</p> <p><b>b) the board/governing body</b></p> <p>The Operations Committee receive the same quarterly trend analysis report on complaints as that presented to the Challenger Panel.</p> <p><b>c) in the Annual Report</b></p> <p>At the current time, learning from complaints is not included in the Annual Report but this will be addressed going forward.</p>
<p><b>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</b></p>	√		



Continuous learning and improvement	Yes	No	Comments
<p><b>What changes have we made?</b></p>			<p><b>The following changes are proposed as a result of the Code:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt the Housing Ombudsman definition of a complaint as specified in the Code</li> <li>• Reduce the complaints process to two formal stages only by excluding the informal stage 0</li> <li>• Adopt the timescales for responding at each stage to bring it in line with the Code</li> <li>• Report lessons learned from complaints within the Annual Report</li> <li>• Consider opportunities to regularly advertise the complaints process to customers outside of a complaint being raised</li> </ul> <p>These changes will be brought in as part of a new housing management system due to be implemented in Spring 2021. The complaints policy and procedure will also be reviewed to reflect these proposed changes.</p>