



Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form

Date completed – December 2020

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			
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>Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?</p>		
	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon:</p> <p>Our procedure stipulates only a timeframe exclusion as follows:</p> <p><i>Complaints should be made within 3 months of the incident giving rise to the concern, however Connexus may, at its discretion, consider complaints raised after 3 months</i></p>		
2	Accessibility		
	<p>Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?</p> <p>Customers can complain in person, by post, by email, by telephone or on social media. There is also a web-based form for customers to submit a complaint.</p>		
	<p>Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?</p>		

	The policy is available as an attachment on the complaints page and the procedure is set out on the web page		
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy? Connexus has an Equality & Diversity Policy in place and discussions with the Ombudsman confirmed that the policy we have in place would suffice, therefore there is no need to develop a specific reasonable adjust policy		
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process? Our website details our procedure, and ways to make a complaint and there is a link to the policy We update the learning we have identified as a result of complaints on our website every six months We publish a newsletter every six months and in the Spring/Summer edition we featured an article on complaints		
3	Complaints team and process		
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	From 4 th Jan 2021	
	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?	N/A	
	Is any third stage optional for residents?	N/A	
	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? All records are kept in our central complaints system		
	At what stage are most complaints resolved? Stage 1 – Complaint		
4	Communication		

<p>Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?</p> <p>Our complaints process encourages two way engagement and customer involvement. However, from the sample complaints we viewed, we do not have full assurance on this. Our new Complaints Manager will address this to improve consistency across all teams.</p>		
<p>Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?</p> <p>Our complaints process encourages two-way engagement, specifically at the complaint and review stages to discuss the issue/s before reaching a final conclusion</p> <p>70% were compliant when we reviewed the 10 complaints closed within the 60 days prior to 08/12/2020</p>		
<p>Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?</p> <p>60% were compliant when we reviewed the 10 complaints closed within the 60 days prior to 08/12/2020</p>		
<p>Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?</p> <p>We have reviewed our letter templates and each have clear guidance on what the customer can expect if they remain dissatisfied and how they can escalate. However, as part of our current procedure, not all complainants receive a letter at the complaint stage</p> <p>We have therefore updated our procedure, which comes into effect in January 2021, to stipulate a response in writing at the complaint and review stage and have ensured the letter confirms what to do if the customer is not happy with the response</p>		
<p>What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?</p> <p>78% of complaints in the last 12 months</p>		
<p>What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?</p> <p>22% of complaints in the last 12 months</p>		
<p>What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one Stage one (with extension) • Stage two Stage two (with extension) 		

	<p>Our complaints system doesn't enable us to report to this level of detail, therefore historic data is unavailable. We have made provisions to record this data in the future and will be able to report this for complaints made from January 2021</p>		
	<p>Where timescales have been extended, did we have good reason?</p> <p>As above</p>		
	<p>Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?</p> <p>As above</p>		
	<p>What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction</p> <p>This is currently unknown as we do not currently seek feedback from customers about how we handled their complaint.</p> <p>The new Complaints Manager will seek to gather this feedback and be able to report on it for complaints made from January 2021.</p>		
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?		
	<p>If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?</p> <p>We currently don't complete a review of complaints or seek feedback from customers to establish this</p> <p>From January 2021, the Complaints Manager will sample complaints to ensure consistency and fairness in our approach and as above, we will seek feedback from customers on our complaints process</p>		
	<p>How many cases (complaints) did we refuse to escalate?</p> <p>Unknown. Our complaints system doesn't enable us to report to this level of detail, therefore historic data is unavailable</p> <p>The Complaints Manager will collate this data from January 2021</p> <p>What was the reason for the refusal?</p>		

	No data available currently		
	<p>Did we explain our decision to the resident?</p> <p>We currently don't complete a review of complaints or seek feedback from customers to establish this</p> <p>From January 2021, the Complaints Manager will sample complaints to ensure consistency and fairness in our approach and as above, we will seek feedback from customers on our complaints process</p>		
7	Outcomes and remedies		
	<p>Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?</p> <p>We don't have assurance that this happens in all complaints as no review of closed complaints are undertaken or feedback sought from customers to establish this. This will be monitored following the appointment of the Complaints Manager and they will work with the relevant teams to put things right.</p>		
8	Continuous learning and improvement		
	<p>What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?</p> <p>Learning captured every six months. The most recent learning completed by our Senior Management Team identified the following learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ to reduce the options on our phone lines. We now have three options instead of seven ○ to be more consistent when handling out of hours calls. We clarified our approach to our teams and will ensure the new policy is clear ○ to improve our communication with you particularly about repairs appointment changes. We changed our working practice so only our Work Planners can cancel or amend an appointment, and they will contact you and explain why ○ to improve our relationships with the neighbours of our Foyer and around our new development sites. We carried out training for new colleagues and have changed our approach to build relationships with local communities before we start building new homes ○ to be more empathetic when hearing your feedback about planned works and routine servicing. The assets team have identified that where possible, their Tenant Liaison Officer will deal with feedback 		
	How do we share these lessons with:		

	<p>a) residents?</p> <p>Learning from complaints is updated on our website every six months</p> <p>In newsletters at least once a year</p> <p>b) the board/governing body?</p> <p>Six monthly updates issued to the Customer Services Committee, last updated on 28/07/2020</p> <p>c) In the Annual Report?</p> <p>The annual report only shows the volume of complaints complete as per the regulatory standards requirements</p> <p>From 2021 the annual report will include learning</p>		
	<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</p>		
	<p>What changes have we made?</p> <p>The policy and procedure have been updated in line with the requirements of the code</p> <p>We have appointed a Complaints Manager to improve complaint handling and learning from complaints</p>		