

# Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form–Railway Housing Association

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>	Yes	
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	Yes	
	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon – Complaints are only excluded if the complaint relates to a matter that is outside of the association’s remit and the complainant will be directed to the appropriate organisation that deals with the matter; or if it relates to a matter that is part of a legal process that has already started and then it will be dealt with in liaison with the association’s legal advisor.</p>	Yes	
<b>2</b>	<b>Accessibility</b>		
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	Yes	
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	Yes	
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	Yes	
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	Yes	
<b>3</b>	<b>Complaints team and process</b>		
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	Yes	
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	Yes	
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	Yes	
	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?	Yes	
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	Yes	
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?	1 <sup>st</sup>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Communication</b>		

	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	Yes	
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	Yes	
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	Yes	
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	Yes	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one? 97% in 2019/20		
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two? 3% in 2019/20		
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage one 83% in 2019/20</li> <li>• Stage one (with extension) 14% in 2019/20</li> <li>• Stage two 100% in 2019/20</li> <li>• Stage two (with extension)</li> </ul>		
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	Yes	
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	Yes	
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction? 43% in 2019/20		
<b>5</b>	<b>Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service</b>		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	N/A	
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	N/A	
<b>6</b>	<b>Fairness in complaint handling</b>		
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	Yes	
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	Yes	
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate? Nil in 2019/20  What was the reason for the refusal? Not applicable		
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	N/A	
<b>7</b>	<b>Outcomes and remedies</b>		
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	Yes	
<b>8</b>	<b>Continuous learning and improvement</b>		
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints? The most recent improvement was an amendment to our Letting Policy to take account of the circumstances of applicants who have been approved for fostering or adopting children.		
	How do we share these lessons with:		

	<p>a) residents? In RHA News and our Annual Report</p> <p>b) the board? Annual review of complaints report</p> <p>c) In the Annual Report? A summary of complaints is included but more details are reported in RHA News</p>		
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	<b>Yes</b>	
	<p>What changes have we made?</p> <p>Adoption of the Housing Ombudsman's definition of a complaint. Included social media as a means of making a complaint. Reduced the number of stages to our complaints procedure from three to two. Ensured that a clear explanation is given if a complaint is not accepted and advice given that complainants have the right to challenge this via the Ombudsman. Advising complainants that they can contact the Ombudsman for advice and support at any stage of their complaint. Increased the response time for responding to a second stage complaint from 10 to 20 working days. Clarified the information that will be given in the written response to a complaint. Clarified the action that may be taken following the investigation of a complaint. Clarified that Managers are authorised to offer compensation when appropriate. When we survey complainants to check their satisfaction with the handling and outcome of their complaint, if a complainant is dissatisfied with the handling we will apologise if appropriate, and explain how our complaints handling process may be changed to prevent the issue happening again; if a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome it will be escalated to the next stage or advice given again about how to take their complaint to a designated person and/or the Housing Ombudsman.</p>		

Date completed – 30 November 2020