

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code:

Self-assessment form

Soho Housing Association (SHA) V1

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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusions are in line with best practice from other leading associations. • Our specialist housing legal advisers Devonshires approved this aspect of the policy. • Our complaints policy was approved by our residents' scrutiny panel and proofed by experienced staff and Board members. 		
2	Accessibility		
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	Yes	
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	Yes	
	<p>Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our diversity, equality and inclusion policy sets out our objectives. 	Yes	
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	Yes	
3	Complaints team and process		
	<p>Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints are initially discussed with the Housing Officer who is best placed to know the history and relevant facts about issues their residents are facing in the first instance. They act as a complaint officer on their own patches. • Complaints that cannot be resolved informally are then investigated and responded to at Stage one by the Head of Housing. 	Yes	
	<p>Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, Housing Officers will discuss concerns and try to resolve complaints informally where possible. 	Yes	

	<p>Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For transparency all complaint status and progress is shared with the operational team. This is also monitored by the senior management team in monthly reporting. 	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
	<p>Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, residents are advised throughout the complaints process how they can escalate their concerns. Letter templates are used that include the contact information for the Housing Ombudsman Service. 	Yes	
	<p>Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All complaints are logged on our CRM system and responses at all stages, as well as interim correspondence is logged against the complaint record. 	Yes	
	<p>At what stage are most complaints resolved?</p> <p>Most complaints are resolved at stage 1.</p>		
4	Communication		
	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	
	<p>What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2021/2022 we have received 18 complaints, of these 14 were responded to at stage one, and two were withdrawn without requiring a formal response. 		
	<p>What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2021/2022 we resolved two complaints at stage two. 		
	<p>What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 out of 18 of complaints were responded to within timeframes and where extensions for responses were required, residents were kept up to date and compensated where appropriate. 		
	Where timescales have been extended, did we have good reason?	Yes	
	Where timescales have been extended, did we keep the resident informed?	Yes	

	<p>What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction</p> <p>We did not carry out satisfaction surveys specifically relating to complaints during 2021/2022 but this is something that we are exploring for the future.</p>		
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service		
	<p>Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?</p> <p>A request for evidence by the HOS was missed in late 2021/22. This was then picked up later in the year and the appropriate information and responses were provided and the resident was compensated according to procedure.</p> <p>Measures are in place to ensure that future deadlines are met.</p>	No	
	<p>Where the timescale was extended, did we keep the Ombudsman informed?</p> <p>Outside of the abovementioned case, SHA have kept in regular communication with the HOS service.</p>	Yes	
6	Fairness in complaint handling		
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	Yes	
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	Yes	
	<p>How many cases did we refuse to escalate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have not refused to escalate a single formal complaint this financial year, and where residents have been unhappy with initial responses and are out of the timescale to escalate they have had the opportunity to speak to a more senior member of SHA staff. 		
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	n/a	
7	Outcomes and remedies		
	<p>Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?</p> <p>For each complaint we receive, our approach is to carry out the necessary steps to ensure that the matter that was the subject of the complaint is resolved. Once we reach a resolution, we look back at the complaint and identify what could have been done differently to prevent the complaint in the first place. Where necessary we amend our processes to stop the same mistakes happening again, and provide training to staff where appropriate.</p>	Yes	
8	Continuous learning and improvement		
	<p>What improvements have we made because of learning from complaints?</p> <p>The majority of complaints received in 2021/2022 were related to repairs and maintenance issues.</p> <p>Improvements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have restructured our housing team and Housing Officers now oversee repairs from start to finish with the input of the Property Services team on more complex issues. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been an improvement in the internal administration of repairs and more robust contract management. • We have been trialling a new repairs system that allowed multiple to bid on works, this means more flexibility in terms of appointments for residents. • We have increased the number of post-repair satisfaction surveys that we carry out. With more surveys we are able to take proactive action if the customer is dissatisfied with an immediate message coming to our team if a negative satisfaction call is received. • Internally we publish our complaints updates on a monthly basis. All formal complaints are logged on our housing management database, this system has built in time-bound workflows that allow us to monitor our complaints and ensure that everything is responded to within our given timescales. 		
	<p>How do we share these lessons with:</p> <p>a) Residents?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In specific complaint response letters • Feedback to our resident representatives on our resident involvement panel. <p>b) The board/governing body?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A complaints review is submitted to board and the exec team receive monthly updates on progress in month and year to date. <p>c) In the Annual Report?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headline service improvements are included in the annual report, this includes those influenced by complaint feedback. 		
	<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
	<p>What changes have we made?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A revised two stage complaints policy was put in place in March 2020. • Soho Housing's revised complaints handling process promotes early dialog with the complainant and lead to increase chances of earliest resolution and customer satisfaction. • We have made it easier for residents to complain by providing different channels including making information clear and accessible on the SHA website. • On the website, there is a downloadable policy. 		