

# Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form

Westminster Community Homes use the City Council's complaints procedure for dealing with concerns raised by tenants.

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			
<b>1</b>	<b>Definition of a complaint</b>	Yes	No
	Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint?  <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>	Yes	
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	WCC policy does	
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?  Evidence relied upon	Yes  Advice given at specific contact points	
<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?		No
	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 WCC Complaints Team	
	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	N/A
	Is any third stage optional for residents?	Yes	
	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 WCC does	
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?	Stage 1	
<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, where timescales allow, complainants are contacted prior to the final decision to notify them of and discuss the outcome	
	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?	No specific data available for WCH complaints but WCC YTD 87%	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	As above but WCC YTD 80%	
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage one</li> <li>Stage one (with extension)</li> </ul>	As above  YTD 88% Not currently measured	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage two</li> <li>Stage two (with extension)</li> </ul>	YTD 9% Not currently measured	
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?		No, however mitigating actions have now been introduced by WCC to enable us to improve in this area
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?		No, however mitigating actions have now been introduced by WCC to enable us to improve in this area
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction	WCC measure satisfaction with overall complaint handling not specifically resolution. Nov - 30% YTD - 33%	
<b>5</b>	<b>Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service</b>		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	Yes	
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	Yes	
<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?  What was the reason for the refusal?	Not currently recorded  Not currently recorded	
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	Yes	
<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?	<p><u>Examples</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional training provided to the contact centre on the following topics; the process for SKY installations, the triage of service requests to other teams and reviewing the job history of the block before raising new jobs.</li> <li>• WCC has also reviewed the process for cancelled appointments following the outcome of a complaint.</li> </ul> <p>WCH is developing a new learning framework which will include all forms of feedback from across the Housing Service.</p> <p>WCH is developing a new recording mechanism to log follow up actions promised and confirm they have been carried out.</p>	

	<p>How do we share these lessons with:</p> <p>a) Residents?</p> <p>b) the board/governing body?</p> <p>c) In the Annual Report?</p>	<p>We do not currently share these lessons with residents but are considering the revised WCC approach where the new Learning Framework will include a communication plan for sharing lessons with residents.</p> <p>Lessons learned are discussed at the Housing Management meetings but will now be included in the KPI report to the Board</p> <p>WCC shares learning in the annual complaints report. WCH does not currently share this learning in the tenants annual report.</p>
	<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</p>	<p>The Code has prompted WCH to request more oversight and specific reporting of complaint metrics and well as to consider the escalation process revision from WCC to WCH.</p> <p>Overall the complaint handling processes meet the standard of the Code but more emphasis will now be placed on learning from complaints.</p>
	<p>What changes have we made? (Reference to the HOS Code)</p>	<p>Carried out a comprehensive review of the way a WCH complaint is dealt with by WCC, and considered areas for improvement. As a result we have already or have set out a plan to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided a PDF of the process on the website (2.5)</li> <li>• We will issue the complaints process to</li> </ul>

		<p>all tenants once a year (2.6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will issue residents with contact information for HOS (2.7)</li> <li>• Defined a reasonable adjustments policy (2.4)</li> <li>• Removed Stage Three of the previous process (3.8)</li> <li>• Set up a complaints filing system on Sharepoint (3.10)</li> <li>• Adjusted reporting to not mention individual staff members as works are undertaken on behalf of the landlord (3.17)</li> <li>• Created a framework for review of the complaint at WCH (4.7)</li> <li>• An annual review of complaint handling will inform continuous learning and be reported to the Board and residents (6.2) (6.10) (6.11)</li> <li>• Further invested in our relationship with the Ombudsman eg by accessing webinars and online training.</li> </ul> <p>In addition WCC has:  Updated their Corporate Complaints Policy to include the requirements set out by the Code - this is currently</p>
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		going through an internal approval process.
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