

## Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code

1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No
1.1	<p>Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint?</p> <p>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.</p>	Complaint's definition included within the revised complaints policy (section 3.2), approved by Board in December, published to customers in January 2021 (rolled out across the organisation)	
1.2	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	'Exclusions' included in the complaints policy (Sections 3.15 - 3.24)	
1.3	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?	<p>The complaints policy relates to services provided by Beyond Housing and its contractors. Where it is not appropriate for this policy to cover certain aspects/issues they are managed through a different policy or process e.g., safeguarding and ASB These can be accessed via the Beyond Housing website, with information and guidance on areas for support:</p> <p><a href="https://beyondhousing.co.uk/my-home/my-safety/safeguarding/">beyondhousing.co.uk/my-home/my-safety/safeguarding/</a></p> <p><a href="https://beyondhousing.co.uk/anti-social-behaviour-hate-crime/anti-social-behaviour/">beyondhousing.co.uk/anti-social-behaviour-hate-crime/anti-social-behaviour/</a></p> <p>The revised policy was considered by involved customers who helped shape and influence the content and agreed sign-off of the final document.</p>	
2	Accessibility		
2.1	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	The complaints policy (section 2.2) details routes available for residents to make a complaint:	



		<p>The approach to handling complaints will be easily accessible and well publicised. It will be simple and easy to understand. Customers can raise a complaint by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email</li> <li>• In writing (Letter)</li> <li>• In person at any Beyond Housing office</li> <li>• By telephone</li> <li>• Via our website <a href="http://www.beyondhousing.co.uk">www.beyondhousing.co.uk</a></li> <li>• Social media</li> </ul>	
2.2	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	Yes	
2.3	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	<p>Equality and diversity is included in the complaints policy (section 2.5) and states Beyond Housing is committed to the principles of diversity and inclusion, i.e., fairness, accessibility and transparency. Beyond Housing values diversity and is committed to promoting the equality of opportunity to ensure all customers are treated fairly.</p> <p>Beyond Housing will seek to identify customers who are vulnerable and account for their specific needs when handling their complaint by making appropriate and reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>Equality, diversity and inclusion is the fundamental principal underpinning behaviours Beyond Housing expect colleagues to display in dealings with customers, colleagues and other stakeholders and the principles are clearly set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, which was revised in April 2020. The policy can be accessed by customers via the website, with information and guidance on areas for support:</p> <p><a href="https://beyondhousing.co.uk/inclusion-equality-and-diversity/">https://beyondhousing.co.uk/inclusion-equality-and-diversity/</a></p>	



2.4	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	<p>Beyond Housing recognises that on occasion service delivery can fall short of both the customers' and our own expectations and we actively welcome customer feedback to continually shape and enhance the quality of our services.</p> <p>Information on how we deal with complaints and how to make a complaint is available on our website:</p> <p><a href="https://beyondhousing.co.uk/a-new-way-of-dealing-with-complaints/">https://beyondhousing.co.uk/a-new-way-of-dealing-with-complaints/</a></p> <p><a href="https://beyondhousing.co.uk/contact-us/make-a-complaint/">https://beyondhousing.co.uk/contact-us/make-a-complaint/</a></p> <p>The revised complaints policy was published on our website in January 2021 and will be referenced in our online Customer Annual Report</p>	
<b>3 Complaints team and process</b>			
3.1	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	<p>Beyond Housing has a dedicated complaints manager to ensure complaints are resolved quickly and effectively. The complaints policy (section 3.4 &amp; 3.5) details the appointment of a lead officer with subject expertise and seniority to investigate and respond to a complaint.</p> <p>We will acknowledge a customer 'stage one' complaint within two working days and advise the customer of the name of the lead officer appointed to investigate and respond.</p> <p>The lead officer will contact the customer to discuss the complaint by telephone, email or a home visit - depending on the nature of the issue. If the complaint cannot be resolved within ten working days, they will agree a resolution date with the customer.</p>	
3.2	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	The complaints manager has the autonomy to advise and support lead officers to resolve complaints. They	



		have the autonomy to intervene and escalate complaints to ensure the complaints service to customers is fair and consistent. They work collaboratively with lead officers across all service areas to provide guidance and support to ensure effective complaint resolution.	
3.3	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	As above.	
3.4	If there is a third stage to the complaint's procedure are residents involved in the decision making?		<p>As outlined in sections 3.12 - 3.13 of the revised complaints policy, the complaints procedure contains two stages, reflecting customer feedback that the previous three stage process was lengthy and drawn out.</p> <p>Following the principles of dispute resolution, recommended by the Housing Ombudsman Service, Beyond Housing seeks to identify continuous improvement through understanding the themes, trends, feedback and lessons learnt to improve service design and delivery.</p> <p>This approach supports our corporate strategy objective of improving the quality of services to customers.</p>
3.5	Is any third stage optional for residents?		No – it was removed from the policy due to customer feedback about the lengthy process
3.6	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	Section 3.11 of the complaints policy (section 3.11) sets out customer's rights to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service.	



		A customer complaints information leaflet is available, which is included with all complaint acknowledgement letters.	
3.7	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	A record of all complaint correspondence, including customer correspondence is kept on a dedicated complaints handling system, with emails and documents stored on an electronic document management system	
3.8	At what stage are most complaints resolved?	The significant proportion of complaints are resolved at stage 1	
<b>4</b>	<b>Communication</b>		
4.1	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	<p>The complaints policy (section 3.5) states that Beyond Housing will contact the customer to discuss the complaint.</p> <p>The complaints procedure requires lead officers to contact the customer at the beginning of their complaint to clarify the details and confirm what outcome the customer would like. The procedure also requires them to agree with the customer when and how they will update them.</p>	
4.2	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>The complaints policy (section 3.5) states that the lead officer will contact the customer to discuss the complaint by telephone, email, or a home visit - depending on the nature of the issue. This is to clarify the complaint details and what outcomes the customer is seeking.</p> <p>The procedure requires lead officers to contact the customer to explain their decision, prior to confirming in the formal response to the complaint. The customer has the opportunity at that point to challenge any area before the final decision.</p>	
4.3	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	The complaints policy (section 3.4) states Beyond Housing will acknowledge a stage one complaint	



		within two working days and advise the customer of the name of the lead officer appointed to investigate and respond to the complaint.	
4.4	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	<p>The customer complaints leaflet is attached to all complaint acknowledgement letters and explains how the process and escalation works.</p> <p>Information on what action customers should take if they remain unhappy with the response is included in all stage 1 and stage 2 written responses.</p> <p>The complaints policy (section 3.8) states if the customer is unhappy with the stage one response, they may appeal within 28 working days. If the customer does appeal, the complaint will be escalated to a stage two complaint.</p> <p>The complaints policy (section 3.11) states the senior manager's complaint response will make it clear it represents Beyond Housing's final decision and the customer may contact the Housing Ombudsman Service to review their complaint.</p>	
4.5	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?	83% (As at end December 2021)	
4.6	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	94% (As at end December 2021)	
4.7	<p>What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage one Stage one (with extension)</li> <li>• Stage two Stage two (with extension)</li> </ul>	<p>Stage one = 100%</p> <p>Stage one (with extension) = 100%</p> <p>Stage two = 100%</p> <p>Stage two (with extension) = 100%</p>	



4.8	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	<p>Any deadline is extended in discussion and agreement with customers and usually due to the complex nature and requiring more time to obtain information from multiple sources to investigate fully.</p> <p>The complaints policy (section 3.5) states the lead officer will contact the customer to discuss the complaint by telephone, email, or a home visit - depending on the nature of the issue. If the complaint cannot be resolved within ten working days, they will agree a resolution date with the customer.</p>	
4.9	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	Where timescales were extended, these were agreed with customers and they were kept informed of progress.	
4.10	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction	<p>Customer satisfaction with complaint handling commenced in January 2021 in line with the revised policy.</p> <p>As at end December 2021, 24% of customers surveyed, were satisfied with the handling of their complaint.</p>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service</b>		
5.1	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	Yes, but we requested two extensions of case 15-day deadlines, due to their complexity, which we met.	
5.2	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	Yes	
<b>6</b>	<b>Fairness in complaint handling</b>		
6.1	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	The complaints policy states 'customers can authorise someone else to raise a concern on their behalf, such as an 'advocate'. This could be a friend/relative or a representative from an external organisation (such as Citizens Advice).'	
6.2	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	The complaints policy (section 2.2) states our approach to handling complaints will be easily accessible and well publicised. It will be simple and easy to understand.	



		When communicating with customers, Beyond Housing aims to use plain English that is jargon free and tailored to the customer's needs. The complaints liaison manager works closely with colleagues to ensure their advice and information is clear and easy to understand.	
6.3	How many cases did we refuse to escalate?  What was the reason for the refusal?	Zero  n/a	
6.4	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	n/a	
<b>7</b>	<b>Outcomes and remedies</b>		
7.1	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	Lead officers are required to complete learning from complaints 'action to improvements' which is centrally monitored by the complaints manager. Findings are logged on a dedicated risk management system to ensure required actions are taken. Action learning sessions take place to discuss/review complaints with multiple or complex service failure and to agree the learning & improvement actions.  The complaints policy (section 6.1) states that Beyond Housing will seek to identify continuous improvement through understanding the themes, trends, feedback and lessons learnt from concerns, complaints and compliments to improve service design and delivery	
<b>8</b>	<b>Continuous learning and improvement</b>		
8.1	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?	1. Customers told us they experienced delays in communication when contacting individual colleagues through their personalised work email. We changed our procedures to ensure that when colleagues are absent from work their email 'out	



		<p>of office message' is present on their email account and provides details of alternative contact details - as this was identified as the biggest cause for delays in responses.</p> <p>2. Customers told us that the breakdown of service charges, when signing up for their property, was unclear. We changed the sign- up process to include a new step where a Beyond Housing colleague explains the elements of service charges breakdown, which requires sign off by customer, before handing over keys.</p> <p>3. Customers told us they were unhappy with the lack of notification when we completed any works to bushes, hedges or trees on Beyond Housing land, near their homes. We will now notify residents living in the immediate vicinity of any works taking place on Beyond Housing's open land.</p> <p>4. Customers complained that they found it difficult to make a complaint online. We therefore have added a paragraph to the bottom of the 'Contact Us' page that directs users 'how to make a complaint' without having to use the website's navigation system. Also, if customers type 'complaints' in the search bar, a list of options is provided.</p>	
8.2	<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 share these lessons with customers via our website and our customer annual report.</p> <p>A quarterly complaint 'customer voice report' is reviewed by the senior leadership team and a summary provided to the Board, in addition to an Annual Complaint report.</p>	



		The complaints policy (section 6.2) states that feedback is reported to the executive, senior leadership team and the Beyond Housing board	
8.3	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	The Code has reinforced the existing customer focus and promoted a proactive and positive complaint handling culture - through recent review of policy and procedures and shared learning to improve services.	
8.4	What changes have we made?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reviewed the complaints policy and procedure</li> <li>2. Simplification of stages - for customer ease</li> <li>3. Improvements in reporting &amp; visibility of open complaints to facilitate greater learning from complaints</li> <li>4. Refresh of complaints information on website from January 2021</li> <li>5. Made it easier for customers to report a complaint online</li> <li>6. Captured the root cause of more concerns and complaints to identify trends and implement service improvements</li> <li>7. Changes to the customer services and experience: A programme of work to ensure we deliver the right solution at the right time to achieve the fastest outcome for customers.</li> <li>8. Improved how we deliver our repairs service: A programme of works aimed at implementing a revised Beyond Housing repairs process that is designed to improve the customer journey, customer communications, right first time and efficiency.</li> <li>9. Improvement to our internal systems to ensure customers and colleagues have access to information and can perform the actions needed</li> </ol>	

