

2024 Annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Code of Complaint Handling (2024 edition)

Completed by:

- Director of ICT & Change, responsible director
- Customer Experience & Communications Manager, responsible manager.

We're pleased to present our annual self-assessment against the complaint handling code, as required by the Housing Ombudsman Service. This report, approved by our board in June 2024, demonstrates our ongoing commitment to providing residents with a fair and efficient complaints process.

This self-assessment is part of our broader annual complaints performance and service improvement report. You can find the full report here [link to be added on approval], which also includes the board's response to the self-assessment and other valuable information on our complaint handling processes.

*'Resident' is the collective word used by the Ombudsman to describe a person who is a tenant, shared ownership or leaseholder. For the purpose of this report, Beyond Housing uses the word 'customer'.

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary/explanation
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <i>'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'</i>	Yes	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The complaints definition is included in the complaints and compliments policy section 3.1. 	
1.3	A resident* does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.	Yes	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is included in the complaints and compliment policy, section 2.2 which states 'Customers can authorise someone else to raise a complaint on their behalf, such as an advocate. This could be a friend/relative or a representative from an external organisation, such as Citizens Advice or MP'. 	Commentary/explanation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colleagues are trained, using the examples from the Ombudsman, in how to recognise the difference between a service request, survey feedback, dissatisfaction and a formal complaint and take appropriate steps to record and resolve the issue for customers as early as possible.
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.	Yes	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is included in the complaints and compliments policy, section 6.2, which states a service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly. Since April 2024, service requests are raised on the customer relationship management (CRM) and assigned to individual case owners to monitor until resolution. Managers also receive updates to ensure effective team case management. 	

1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – All CRM cases and contacts in the CRM are timestamped, creating a complete audit trail to evidence our commitment to address both service request cases and complaint cases concurrently for the customer. – Colleagues are trained to ensure that if a customer is dissatisfied with the service received when dealing with their service request, to raise a complaint. 	
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.	Yes	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Autoreplies to surveys within our customer transactional survey software. 	Commentary/explanation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – When a customer completes a survey, they receive an auto reply which includes details of how they can complain to us.

Section 2: Exclusions


Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary/explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – This is included in the complaints and compliment policy, section 6.30 (exclusions). If we decide not to accept a complaint, we will provide a detailed explanation to the customer explaining our reasons why the matter is not suitable for our complaints process and the right to take their complaint (as a result of our decision) to the Ombudsman. 	

2.2	<p>A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. • Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court. • Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy. 	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – This is included in the complaints and compliment policy, section 6.29 (exclusions). Which sets out all the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint. 	
2.3	<p>Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.</p>	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – This is included in the complaints and compliment policy, section 6.29 (exclusions) where it refers to the 12 month period. – The procedure includes reference to applying discretion when a complaint is outside 12 months. 	
2.4	<p>If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to</p>	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – This is included in the complaints and compliment policy, section 6.30 (exclusions), and states if we decide not to accept a complaint, we will provide a detailed explanation to the customer explaining our 	

	the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.		reasons why the matter is not suitable for our complaints process and the right to take our decision to the Ombudsman.	
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	– This is included in the complaints and compliment policy , section 6.29 (exclusions). Which sets out all the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint.	

Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy, section 2.2 details channels available for residents to make a complaint. – Customers can raise a complaint by, email, letter, in person at any Beyond Housing office, by telephone, website form, on social media or to any colleague. – Equality and diversity are included in the complaints and compliment policy section 2.6 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. – Online services have an accessibility tool to assist residents and meet the World Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0. – Equality, diversity and inclusion is the fundamental principal underpinning behaviours Beyond Housing expect colleagues to display in dealings with customers, colleagues and other stakeholders. The principles are set out in the equality, diversity, and inclusion policy, revised in April 2020. 	<p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The website will be further enhanced to provide an FAQ section on complaints to support customers by October 2024.
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – All colleagues are trained on a complaints policy and how to log a complaint within the CRM system. Training manuals, videos and guidance documents are available on our intranet and from June 2024 it has been identified as mandatory learning. 	

			<p>Complaints handling - Further support for colleagues</p> <p>Join Lynn Fromme for a SLICE at 12.30pm on Thursday 21 March to learn more about the new changes to our complaint handling process, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your responsibilities under the new process • Logging and responding to instances of dissatisfaction • Ensuring a great customer experience. <p>The SLICE will be hosted online via Teams:</p> <p>👉 Click here to join the meeting 👉</p> <p>You have also been emailed with an iCalendar attachment you can add to your own diary 📅</p> 	
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy section 1.1 details how Beyond Housing is proactive in welcoming all feedback from all customers and is a fundamental part of how we improve services. – Complaint insight and learning feeds into our Customer Experience Programme and service improvement projects. 	
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord’s website.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy section 6.0 details the stages of a complaint. – The Beyond Housing complaints and compliments policy is published online and is digitally (TV screen) promoted in our receptions. Additionally, a printed copy can be requested. – We also provide a complaint handling information leaflet with every stage 1 complaint acknowledgement letter. 	

3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – This is included in the complaints and compliment policy, section 2.3. – Details of the Housing Ombudsman scheme are displayed on posters, or on TVs in office reception areas, in newsletters and on our website. 	
3.6	Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – This is included in the complaints and compliment policy, section 2.2 which states ‘Customers can authorise someone else to raise a complaint on their behalf, such as an advocate. This could be a friend/relative or a representative from an external organisation, such as Citizens Advice or MP. 	
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – This is included in the complaints and compliment policy, section 6.19 detailing the methods the Ombudsman can be contacted. – We issue a complaint handling information leaflet with every stage 1 complaint acknowledgement letter. – We publish the Complaint Handling Code online. – Detail of the Housing Ombudsman service are also displayed on posters, or on TVs in office reception areas and on our website. – We provide details of how to contact the Housing Ombudsman in our final paragraph of our stage 2 response letter. 	

Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Steve Rawson, Chief Operations Officer, is the appointed person accountable for Beyond Housing's complaint handling. – Board Non-Executive Director, Cath Owston is the member responsible for complaints (the MRC). – In addition, day to day management of complaints is carried out by a complaints manager who leads a dedicated team of 3 complaint advisors ensuring complaints are resolved quickly and effectively, in line with the Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code. The complaints manager is also the liaison lead with the Ombudsman. 	
4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	Yes	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints manager and Complaints team has access to staff at all levels to facilitate prompt resolution through Teams chat, email, face-to-face or phone call. – Weekly and monthly meetings are held with key services in the business. 	
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively	Yes	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Beyond Housing invested and implemented a new complaint management system in 2023 within the CRM system. It utilises case management tools for improved tracking, reporting, SLA, and code compliance. – Our commitment to prioritising complaint handling can be evidenced by our early implementation of the Ombudsman's new complaint handling code ahead 	

			<p>of schedule in March 24, to ensure a smooth transition for colleagues and minimal disruption to customer service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Our customer experience programme empowers a culture of continuous improvement by actively using customer feedback, including complaints, to identify areas for service improvement. – In 2024, Beyond Housing expanded the size of the Complaints team to ensure it is suitably resourced to handle complaints effectively. – Job descriptions and person specifications for the Complaints team hold them accountable for understanding and following the code. – All colleagues are trained about the complaints policy, the Ombudsman code and how to log a complaint within the CRM system. Training manuals, videos and guidance documents are available on our intranet. 	
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Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There is only one complaints and compliments policy, which was reviewed in 2024 in consultation with customers. – Section 2.5 of the policy is clear how Beyond Housing is committed to the principles of diversity and inclusion, i.e. fairness, accessibility and transparency. We value diversity and are committed to promoting equality of opportunity to ensure that all customers are treated fairly. 	

5.2	The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliments policy, section 6.0, defines the two stages of our complaints handling process. A stage 1 and stage 2 complaint. There are no informal/extra named stages. 	
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliments policy, section 6.0, defines the two stages of our complaints handling process. A stage 1 complaint and stage 2 complaint. There are no informal/extra named stages. 	
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliments policy, section 6.1 states 'if a customer expresses dissatisfaction with a service or action/lack of action taken by the organisation, its own employees, or those acting on its behalf, we will log the issue as a stage one complaint.' 	
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Beyond Housing colleagues are trained to log a complaint when a customer expresses dissatisfaction with the actions taken by a third party operating on Beyond Housing's behalf. 	
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliments policy, section 6.9 details how we will set out our understanding of a complaint. 	

	refer to this as “the complaint definition”. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – When a complaint is assigned to a lead officer, they contact the customer to ensure we understand the nature of their complaint and ask if any clarification is required. – The complaints and compliments policy, sections 6.5 & 6.14 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. 	
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – When the lead officer contacts the customer to discuss the complaint by telephone, email, or a home visit - depending on the nature of the issue, they will discuss what issues we are and are not responsible for and confirm this in our stage 1 or stage 2 response letter, outlining the reasons why. 	
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully. 	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – At Beyond Housing, customer satisfaction is a priority. When a customer brings a complaint to our attention, we view it as an opportunity to learn and improve. We take all complaints seriously and address them with a fair, open-minded approach. – The complaints and compliment policy section 2.5 defines how we handle a complaint investigation and how it will be conducted in an impartial manner, seeking sufficient, reliable information from both parties so that fair and appropriate findings and recommendations can be made. – Service centre advisors undergo active listening training to ensure they have the skills to give the customer opportunity to share their concerns without interruption. 	
5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in	Yes	Evidence	

	<p>this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The procedure includes a section to ensure suitable intervals are agreed with the customer for keeping them informed about their complaint. 	
5.10	<p>Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.</p>	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Equality and diversity are included in the complaints and compliment policy section 2.7 and states we will seek to identify customers who are vulnerable and account for their specific needs when handling their complaints by making appropriate and reasonable adjustments. – Records of reasonable adjustment are recorded on the customer’s record on the CRM. – Where an adjustment is temporary, an end date is added to the system for this to automatically be removed which is agreed with the customer. 	
5.11	<p>Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.</p>	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy section 6.12 details an appeal at stage 1, will be escalated to stage 2. If the customer is unhappy with the stage 1 response, the customer may appeal within 28 working days. If the customer does appeal, the complaint will be escalated to a stage 2 complaint. – Section 6.29 of our policy states that we will accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. There may be occasions where it is not appropriate for the policy to accept or escalate a complaint, where certain aspects/issues are managed in a different process (listed in policy). – The number of stage 1 complaints escalated to a stage 2 is reported on the internal complaint performance dashboard. 	

5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Complaints records, correspondence and supporting documentation is held in our complaints customer relationship management (CRM) system. – The Complaints team utilise a shared Outlook mailbox for customers to send in evidence, communications, and updates on complaints. – The Complaints team maintains a central document folder where all complaints are stored. Each complaint is assigned a unique case number and filed within its own dedicated folder. – Any reports or surveys will be referenced within the complaint record and available on other internal systems, such as the housing management system and Documotive. 	
5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Section 6 of the complaints and compliments policy states that at both stages of our complaints process we will consider remedies at any point within the complaints process to resolve the complaint as early as possible. 	
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – This is included in the complaints and compliment policy, section 6.3 which states we will seek to manage the behaviour in line with our vexatious and/or habitual complainant procedure. – Complaints records, correspondence and supporting documentation is held in our customer relationship management (CRM) system. 	<p>Commentary/explanation</p> <p>Complainants identified as habitual or vexatious are notified by writing of the reasons why they have been classified as habitual or vexatious complainants and of the action to be taken.</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The vexatious and/or habitual complainants procedure details the definition of an habitual or vexatious complainant, options for how to dealing with the complainant and withdrawal of the status. - The personal safety risk procedure sets out how we will manage services to customers, members of their households or visitors who have been violent and/or potentially violent or exhibit behaviours that causes colleagues and contractors genuine concern for their safety and welfare. - The personal safety risk procedure outlines how customers are informed and the duration of the restrictions alongside the review periods to remove restrictions. 	<p>Unreasonable volumes of contacts are recorded and evidenced via our CRM system.</p> <p>Once complainants have been determined as habitual or vexatious there is a review period for withdrawing this status if complainants subsequently demonstrate a more reasonable approach.</p>
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The vexatious and/or habitual complainants procedure details the options for dealing with customers who meet the definition (also detailed in the procedure) of a vexatious and/or habitual complainant. Restrictions are fair and reasonable and proportionate. - It states that equality and diversity need to be carefully considered before a vexatious or habitual status is given. - The personal safety risk procedure has defined five categories of risk and the way that service will be provided for each of those categories. 	

Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Complaints are acknowledged within 2 days as detailed in section 6.4 of the complaints and compliment policy. – Section 6.5 details that the lead officer will contact the customer to understand the complexity and vulnerabilities or risks of the case to reach a resolution promptly. – In instances where a customer's safety is at risk due to a necessary repair, upon receiving the complaint, repair jobs are prioritised and completed according to the Repairs Policy, which outlines the designated timeframes for completion. i.e. 4 hrs for an emergency repair. 	
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u>	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy section 6.4 which states we will acknowledge a customer stage 1 complaint within two working days and advise the customer of the name of the lead officer appointed to investigate and respond to the complaint. – This timeframe exceeds the industry standard of five days, demonstrating our commitment to prompt complaint handling. – The CRM complaint case management sets SLAs to ensure the complaint is acknowledged within timescales. 	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All CRM cases and contacts in the CRM are timestamps, creating a complete audit trail to evidence when SLAs are met, and when they are not. 	
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Section 6.5 of the complaints and compliment policy states will we resolve stage 1 complaints in 10 working days and section 6.6 state will we agree an extension with the customer. - In 23/24, 99.5% of stage 1 complaints were responded to in full within 10 working days or agreed extended deadlines. 	
6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The complaints and compliment policy section 6.6 states that we recognise that some complaints may require detailed investigations; where this is the case, we will agree with the customer about the timescale in which we will respond. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the customer. - In 23/24, 115 stage 1 complaints were extended. 	
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We issue a complaint handling information leaflet with every stage 1 complaint acknowledgement letter and include details in the stage 1 and 2 response letters. - For assurance, a link to the Ombudsman contact details is included in the email footer of all email sent by the Complaints team. 	
6.6	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The complaints and compliment policy section 6.10 states a complaint response must be sent to the 	

	required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.		customer when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue, are completed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Outstanding actions are tracked and actioned by the lead officer with regular updates provided to the customer and monitored by the Complaints team to ensure completion. 	
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy section 6.5 & 6.9 states that the lead officer will contact the customer to investigate the complaint and provide a written response to the complaint which will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complaint stage • The complaint definition • The decision on the complaint • The reasons for any decisions made • The details of any remedy offered to put things right • Details of any outstanding actions • Details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the customer is not satisfied with the answer. – The complaint template outcome letters clearly require all complaint leads to address every point of the complaint scope. – The complaints manager quality checks all stage responses to ensure all required information is included and issues are addressed. 	
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new	Yes	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy section 6.11 states that where customers raise additional complaints during the investigation, these will be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are relevant, and the stage 1 response has not been 	

	issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.		issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the complaint will be logged as a new complaint.	
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response. 	Yes	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy section 6.9 states that the lead officer will provide a written response to the complaint which will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complaint stage • The complaint definition • The decision on the complaint • The reasons for any decisions made • The details of any remedy offered to put things right • Details of any outstanding actions • Details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the customer is not satisfied with the answer. • The complaints manager quality checks all stage responses to ensure all required information is included and issues are addressed. 	

Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary/explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy section 6.12 states If the customer is unhappy with the stage 1 response, the customer may appeal within 28 	

			<p>working days. If the customer does appeal, the complaint will be escalated to a stage 2 complaint.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In 23/24, 131 complaints were progressed to stage 2. 	
6.11	<p>Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.</p>	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy section 6.13 which states we will acknowledge a customer stage 2 complaint within two working days and advise the customer of the name of the lead officer appointed to investigate and respond to the complaint. – This timeframe exceeds the industry standard of five days, demonstrating our commitment to prompt complaint handling. – The CRM complaint case management sets SLAs to ensure the complaint is acknowledged within timescales. – All CRM cases and contacts in the CRM are timestamps, creating a complete audit trail to evidence when SLAs are met, and when they are not. 	
6.12	<p>Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.</p>	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy section 6.12 states if the customer is unhappy with the stage 1 response, the customer may appeal within 28 working days. 	
6.13	<p>The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.</p>	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy section 6.13 states a senior manager is appointed to all stage 2 complaints. – This is not the same lead who dealt with the complaint at stage 1. 	
6.14	<p>Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 within 20 working</p>	Yes	<p>Evidence</p>	

	<u>days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Section 6.15 of the complaints and compliment policy states will we resolve stage 2 complaints in 20 working days and section 6.6 states will we agree an extension with the customer. – In 23/24, 97.5% of stage 1 complaints were responded to in full within 20 working days or agreed extended deadlines. 	
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy section 6.15 states that we recognise that some complaints may require detailed investigations; where this is the case, we will agree with the customer about the timescale in which we will respond. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the customer. – In 23/24, 36 stage 2 complaints were extended. 	
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – This is included in the complaints and compliment policy, section 6.19 detailing the methods the Ombudsman can be contacted. – We issue a complaint handling information leaflet with every stage 1 complaint acknowledgement letter and include details in the stage 1 and 2 response letters. – For assurance, a link to the Ombudsman contact details is included in the email footer of all email sent by the Complaints team. 	
6.17	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy section 6.10 states a complaint response must be sent to the 	

	required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.		customer when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue, are completed. Outstanding actions will be tracked and actioned by the lead officer with regular updates provided to the customer and monitored by the Complaints team to ensure completion.	
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaint template outcome letters clearly require all complaint leads to address every point of the complaint scope. – Section 6.5 & 6.9 of the complaints and compliment policy states that the lead officer will contact the customer to investigate the complaint and provide a written response and what is included. However, this is for stage 1. – The procedure references the requirements for both stages, but the policy needs to be revised for improved clarity on this point for stage 2. – The complaints manager quality checks all stage responses to ensure all required information is included and issues are addressed. 	
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the complaint stage b. the complaint definition c. the decision on the complaint d. the reasons for any decisions made e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right 	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaint template outcome letters clearly require all complaint leads to address every point of the complaint scope. – Section 6.5 & 6.9 of the complaints and compliment policy states that the lead officer will contact the customer to investigate the complaint and provide a written response and what is included. However, this is for stage 1. 	

	<p>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</p> <p>g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The procedure references the requirements for both stages, but the policy needs to be revised for improved clarity on this point for stage 2. – The complaints manager quality checks all stage responses to ensure all required information is included and issues are addressed. 	
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord’s final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy section 6.13 states a senior manager will be appointed to all stage 2 complaints. 	

Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary/explanation
7.1	<p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologising • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong • Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons • Taking action if there has been delay • Reconsidering or changing a decision • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum • Providing a financial remedy 	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy section 1.4 states we aim to deliver an excellent customer experience in line with our corporate strategy to provide quality services to customers. If we fail to do this, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologise • Accept responsibility where we have failed • If in our control, we will put things right. Where we are unable to control or influence the issue, we will explain and signpost to the relevant agencies/partners where possible • Listen to complaints and take effective action to prevent the same thing from happening again and learn from the experience. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing policies, procedures or practices. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The lead officer and Complaints team have the authority to put actions in place to put things right. – The complaint closure letters clearly require the lead officer to confirm the actions taken to put things right and any outstanding actions that are required. – The team follows established procedures, including a compensation guide, action tracker, and feedback loops for learning and training improvement. – The complaints manager quality checks all complaint responses to ensure this information is provided to customer. – The Complaints team maintains a central document folder where all complaints are stored. Each complaint is assigned a unique case number and all evidence and correspondence filed within its own dedicated folder. – We share Housing Ombudsman spotlight reports to consider and implement their recommendations whenever possible. This is reported to Audit. 	
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy section 6.33 states that we recognise that, from time to time, we might not be able to provide the high-quality services that we have promised, and our customers expect. Where this happens, we aim to put things right quickly, and may also offer compensation to those who have received a poor standard of service. The compensation procedure section 1.1 sets out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The circumstances when we may offer compensation • The level of compensation that may be offered • How compensation payments are made • What customers can do if they are dissatisfied with a decision about compensation. 	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The compensation procedure defines the discretionary compensation payments, and section 1.12 notes - if upon the complaint investigation the circumstance exceeds the above parameters, the lead officer and/or complaint manager can escalate the case for an independent assessment by senior manager who will determine the appropriate value of compensation based on the individual case circumstances. 	
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The compensation procedure section 1.21 states the reasons for the offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantifiable Loss • Time (duration of avoidable loss) • Distress and inconvenience (impact of avoidable loss) • Complaint Handling Failure. - This is included in the remedy offer to the customer. - The final response letter outlines all actions identified to put things right. 	
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have regard for the Housing Ombudsman's Remedies Guidance in making assessments about appropriate remedies offers, including compensation payments. 	

Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary/explanation
8.1	Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their 	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We publish a 'customer annual report' on our website which includes qualitative and quantitative analysis of our complaints, findings of non-compliance of the code, service improvement from 	

	<p>complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.</p> <p>b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord’s complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept;</p> <p>c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;</p> <p>d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;</p> <p>e. any annual report about the landlord’s performance from the Ombudsman; and</p> <p>f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.</p>		<p>complaints, any annual reports, relevant reports/publications issued by the Ombudsman.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – We publish the self-assessment on the website annually. <p>The operational & performance meeting receives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quarterly and annual performance information on complaint measures, including complaint volumes, the percentage of complaints responded to within timescale, and performance against TSMs. <p>The governance and review Committee receives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reports of individual HOS case outcomes, including any related to severe maladministration findings, recommendations of the Ombudsman, and steps we will take to rectify and prevent reoccurrence, and good practice findings. – Housing Ombudsman sector updates including spotlight reports. <p>The board receives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quarterly and annual performance information on complaint measures, including complaint volumes, the percentage of complaints responded to within timescale, and performance against TSMs. – The Customer Annual Report. – Housing Ombudsman self-assessment. – The current publishing schedule of June 30 for the Housing Ombudsman's self-assessment conflicts with our existing publishing schedules and requires the addition of the complaint performance for refused complaints. 	
8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord’s governing body (or equivalent) and	Yes	Evidence	Action

	published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.		– The annual complaints performance and service improvements report will be shared with our board and published on our website by 30 June 2024.	– We will add the Board's response to the report/alongside the report on the website
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	As required	
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	As required	
8.5	If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.	Yes	As required	

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The complaints and compliment policy sections 2.8, 3.3, 5.4. – Root cause analysis is conducted upon closure of all complaints to identify if there was a service failure and what we can do to prevent it from reoccurring. 	Monthly meetings are held with the complaints manager and service improvement lead to review root cause analysis of complaints to inform service improvements.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The insight informs customer experience and support prioritisation of service improvement projects. 	
9.2	<p>A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.</p>	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The complaints and compliment policy section 2.8, 3.3, 5.4. - Root cause analysis is conducted upon closure of all complaints to identify if there was a service failure and what we can do to prevent it from reoccurring. - The Complaints team maintains a central tracker where root cause analysis is recorded. This is used by the Insight team and Service Improvement team to improve services to customers. - Our customer experience programme empowers a culture of continuous improvement by actively using customer feedback and insight, including complaints, to identify areas for positive changes in services delivery. 	
9.3	<p>Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.</p>	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We publish an 'customer annual report' on our website which includes qualitative and quantitative analysis of our complaints, findings of non-compliance of the code, service improvement from complaints, any annual reports, relevant reports/publications issued by the Ombudsman. This is shared with all colleagues and reported to board. - We produce a quarterly customer voice report which includes a 'Customer said, We did' section and updates from our customer experience programme. This is shared with all colleagues and reported to the Operational & Performance meeting and Board. 	
9.4	<p>Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or</p>	Yes	<p>Evidence</p>	

	trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steve Rawson, Chief Operations Officer is the appointed person accountable for Beyond Housing's complaint handling. 	
9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board Non-Executive Director, Cath Owston, following approval of the role profile by the board on 22 February 2024 will be the member responsible for complaints (the MRC). 	
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quarterly updates provided to governing body. 	
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related 	Yes	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board Director, Cath Owston receives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly and annual performance information on complaint measures, including complaint volumes, the percentage of complaints responded to within timescale, and performance against TSMs. • Reports of individual HOS case outcomes, including any related to severe maladministration findings, recommendations of the Ombudsman, and steps we will take to rectify and prevent reoccurrence, and good practice findings. • Housing Ombudsman sector updates including spotlight reports. 	

	to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.			
9.8	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to: a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.	Yes	Evidence – The principles of this are covered within our complaints policy. – All colleagues have a standard objective to complete assigned mandatory e-learning. Complaints handling is identified as mandatory learning for all colleagues and details points a-c. – Aligning to our company goals and TSMs, managers are setting personal objectives that directly contribute to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). This ensures colleagues support complaints handling through their individual efforts with performance is regularly reviewed throughout the year.	