

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Leeds & Yorkshire Housing Association Self-assessment form (December 2020)

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code				
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No	Actions
	<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>		x	Our definition does not match the HOS definition. Recommend that the LYHA Complaints policy is adjusted.
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	x		<p>Our current policy states:</p> <p>We will not treat an initial request for a service e.g. a repair to a home, a first report about anti-social behavior, or a first request for information or an explanation of our policies/procedures as an expression of dissatisfaction or a formal complaint.</p> <p>A report about something that we don't control or is not our responsibility, e.g. a repair to local authority adopted street lighting will not be dealt with under this policy – where we can we will support customers to raise it with the appropriate organisation.</p>

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	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?	x	<p>Evidence relied upon – CEC minutes June 2018 Complaints Policy Complaints Handling Code</p> <p>We consulted on our policy with customers via our Customer Experience Committee, the policy was approved in June 2018</p> <p>Following our review of the complaints code we have recommended an addition that states “A matter that has already been consider within the complaints policy”</p>
2	Accessibility		
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	x	<p>We welcome feedback in a variety of ways directing contact via our Customer Services Team via following routes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E: info@lyha.co.uk • Tel: 0113 248 3335 • social media: Facebook @LeedsYorkshireHA / Twitter @LYHAtweets • our website www.lyha.co.uk – resolve an issue section • in person with a member of staff • letter: 2 Shire Oak Road, Leeds, LS6 2TN
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	x	<p>A summary of our complaints policy is available online and includes a process map of procedure LYHA Complaints Summary</p>

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	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?		<p>x</p> <p>We do not have a specific policy to consider reasonable adjustments. The code states that landlords shall have a reasonable adjustments policy in place to address this.</p> <p>LYHA have E&D sections in each individual policy that refers to reasonable adjustments and accessibility. It is recommended that this section is incorporated into the revised complaints policy.</p>
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	x	<p>We routinely provide updates on our complaint's performance via our customer newsletters. Our customer welcome pack contains details of our complaints process for new customers. Our standard complaints letters include reference to the complaints process.</p>
3	Complaints team and process		
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?		<p>x</p> <p>We do not have a dedicated complaints post. However, complaints form part of the role responsibilities for the Customer Services Team Leader and Neighbourhood Services Manager who lead.</p>
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	x	<p>All colleagues at LYHA are encouraged and provided with the autonomy to resolve complaints where possible including the lead officers.</p>
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	x	<p>Yes and all members of our leadership team are always open to involvement. A review of our complaints database demonstrates regular involvement of a cross section of colleagues in undertaking complaints reviews</p>

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If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?	x		<p>Our complaints procedure does currently have a stage three process. However, we have recommended this is reduced this to two stages following this review of the complaints code which stipulates the Housing Ombudsman sees no need for three stages.</p> <p>If the complaint is to proceed to stage 2 of our new policy then the Complaint Review Panel will be convened and made up of a minimum of two people and can include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Members from LYHA Executive Management Team and/or wider Leadership Team ○ Customers who are members of the Customer Experience Committee ○ Members of LYHA's Board of Management
Is any third stage optional for residents?	x		It is recommended that stage 3 is removed from the policy.
Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	x		Our policy provides advice and guidance on contacting the Ombudsman if the customer remains dissatisfied with LYHA following exhaustion of our complaints process. Our response letters also provide contact details of the Housing Ombudsman.
Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	x		We have a dedicated complaints database for recording of complaints. Our CRM is updated with

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			all customer contacts including complaints and responses are saved within customer e-housefiles.
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?		So far this year, we have resolved 100% of our complaints at stage 1.
4	Communication		
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	x	<p>All stages of our process encourage colleagues to take ownership for resolving a complaint quickly and to put things right at the earliest opportunity. Our policy provides a commitment that we will keep customer up to date throughout our review of their complaint.</p> <p>Our target response time for complaints is 5 days and this allows us to provide a timely response to customers.</p>
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	x	<p>Our colleagues are encouraged to make contact with complainants throughout a complaints investigation this includes to provide initial feedback and seek challenge from customers. This is not detailed in our policy but we have recommended an adjustment to encourage this contact.</p> <p>In addition, our policy provides clear guidance on responding/challenging decisions via request to escalates complaints to the next stage of process including and up to the Housing Ombudsman.</p>

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	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	x	Yes. All complaints are acknowledged and logged within 2 working days.
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	x	Details are included in both our response letters and policy.
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?		So far this year, we have resolved 100% of our complaints at stage 1.
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?		We have not had any stage 2 complaints during 2020/21
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one • Stage one (with extension) • Stage two • Stage two (with extension) 		Stage one – 83.7% Stage one (extension) – 83.7% Stage two – no stage two complaints in 2020/21
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	x	Yes, colleagues hold discussions with complainants to discuss extensions to timescales, explain rationale and agree revised responses dates.
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	x	As above
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction		LYHA currently has two measures of satisfaction. At the end of October 2020/21: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Satisfaction with handling – 50% 2. Satisfaction with outcome – 44%
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?		N/A – we have had no formal Housing Ombudsman requests

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	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?		N/A
6	Fairness in complaint handling		
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?		x
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	x	
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate? What was the reason for the refusal?		
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?		
7	Outcomes and remedies		
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	x	
8	Continuous learning and improvement		

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What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?			<p>3 significant changes have been made at LYHA as a result of recent lessons from complaints.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In response to high levels of dissatisfaction relating to customers being unable to contact our customer services team and having lengthy waits we undertook a review of the team. This included an increase in resource to match demand, introduction of toolbox talks and personal development plans to increase first point contact resolution and the installation of a new phone system to better manage incoming contact to LYHA. 2. Our lessons learned in relation to our repairs service prompted the early end of our contact with our previous responsive repairs contractor, Neo. We recently procured a new contractor which included the involvement of LYHA customers in the procurement exercise 3. Following a high number of complaints relating to the heating system on the Elmetes estate we initiated a large-scale project investing around £1.2 million in improvements.
How do we share these lessons with: a) residents?			<p>For our customers we include content in our:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You Said We Did publications • Routine Newsletters • In our individual complaint responses

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<p>b) the board/governing body?</p> <p>c) In the Annual Report?</p>			<p>For our Board we provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly complaints reporting to Customer Experience Committee, a sub-committee of the Board <p>In our Annual Report we provide an overview of complaints handling performance and lessons learned.</p> <p>In addition, we share lessons learned with colleagues thoroughly monthly reflective practice sessions where we reflect on previous months complaints and ensure lessons are implemented.</p>
Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	x		See below
What changes have we made?			<p>A number of policy amendments are recommended following the self-assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amending our complaints definition Adjusting what is considered not to be a complaint. Making it clear someone else can act on a customers behalf Detailing examples of resolution remedies Reducing our complaints process to two stages rather than three. Introducing our commitment to respond to HOS requests for information within 15 days.

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A number of additional minor amendments to the policy to improve clarity

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