

# Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code:

## Self-assessment form – (For period 1<sup>st</sup> April 20 – 21<sup>st</sup> December 20)

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			YMCA St Paul's Group		
		Yes	No	Current position	Action required
<b>1</b>	<b>Definition of a complaint</b>				
	<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>	✓			
	<p>Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?</p>	✓		<p>If the complaint is in relation to an event that happened more than 6 months ago as well as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Has already been raised through our complaints process</li> <li>b) Is, has or may be handled under an appeals process (lettings)</li> <li>c) Is, has or should be handled through legal action</li> <li>d) Is an initial notification or request for service or information</li> <li>e) Is an initial report of anti-social behaviour</li> <li>f) Is an internal staff or volunteer complaint (which should instead be treated in line with the grievance or whistleblowing policies)</li> <li>g) Is raised anonymously or without any means of speaking to the complainant in order to substantiate their complaint</li> </ul>	

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code				YMCA St Paul's Group	
		Yes	No	Current position	Action required
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?  Evidence relied upon	✓		We believe the above is fair and in line with the code.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Accessibility</b>				
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	✓		Via a paper form, by email, by letter, via the website, via a member of staff (who will assist in getting a form completed) or via social media	
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	✓		It is available on our website.	We need to update the customer leaflet to reflect the changes to the complaints handling timeframe.
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?		✓	Not for customers, however, our complaints policy does state:  We are committed to treating everyone fairly, recognising the protected characteristics set out in the Equalities Legislation. We will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities and will take positive action where appropriate.  We make appropriate arrangements where necessary to ensure that customers with	We will draw up a Reasonable Adjustments Policy for service users which will support a range of policies, including our Compliment, Complaints and Suggestions Policy.

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code				YMCA St Paul's Group	
		Yes	No	Current position	Action required
				distinct communication needs are not unreasonably and disproportionately affected. This could involve providing communications in alternative languages or formats or providing interpretative or transcription assistance where appropriate.	
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	✓		Residents are informed of this during their induction and throughout their stay with us.	Review this process in the new year, to ensure this happens consistently at all sites and appropriate posters are displayed in prominent locations.
<b>3</b>	<b>Complaints team and process</b>				
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	✓		Yes, the Executive Assistant to the Group Director of Operations.	
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	✓			
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	✓			
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?	N/A	N/A	We only have 2 stages.	
	Is any third stage optional for residents?		✓		
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	✓			
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	✓			This needs further work in the new year to ensure consistency, with additional training on the code and the policy for relevant service managers.

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			YMCA St Paul's Group	
	Yes	No	Current position	Action required
At what stage are most complaints resolved?			Stage 1 (of the 91* complaints received since April 20 only 4 were escalated to stage 2)  <i>*this number includes non-housing complaints.</i>	
<b>4 Communication</b>				
Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	✓			Further training required to ensure this is done consistently.
Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?		✓	Whilst there is an appeals process and an opportunity to meet before a decision is made, the chance to respond and challenge the final decision needs to be built into future reviews of the policy.	Build into the policy at the next review.
Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?		✓	All complaints are logged within the five days but we are unable to evidence that they have all been acknowledged within the 5 days at this stage.	We will ensure this is part of the training in the new year to ensure consistency.
Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	✓			As per points above, further training required to ensure consistency. Will also build template letters for each stage.
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?			YTD 95.6% of complaints were resolved at stage 1 (of the 91* complaints received since April 20	

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			YMCA St Paul's Group		
		Yes	No	Current position	Action required
				only 4 were escalated to stage 2)  <i>*this number includes non-housing complaints.</i>	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?			Our system does not currently allow to report this easily. Since April 20, 1 complaint was escalated externally.	The system needs to be reviewed to ensure this type of information can be easily pulled from it.
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage one Stage one (with extension)</li> <li>• Stage two Stage two (with extension)</li> </ul>			For complaints received up to December 20 this information was not reportable.	Changes have been made to the system which will allow us to report this from Q4 onwards.
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?			As above.	As above.
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?			As above.	As above.
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction			The majority of complaints are resolved to the residents' satisfaction (mostly at stage 1 and some at stage 2). Very few are escalated externally or continue to inform us that they are unsatisfied after having exhausted our complaints process.	A question regarding this to be included in future resident surveys.
<b>5</b>	<b>Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service</b>				
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	✓			

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code				YMCA St Paul's Group	
		Yes	No	Current position	Action required
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?			N/A	
<b>6</b>	<b>Fairness in complaint handling</b>				
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	✓		No issues previously encountered	
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	✓		No issues previously encountered	
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate?  What was the reason for the refusal?			We have not refused to escalate any complaints.	Build refusal reporting into the system.
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?			N/A as we have not refused any escalations.	
<b>7</b>	<b>Outcomes and remedies</b>				
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	✓			Further work required on the system to make this more reportable in the future.
<b>8</b>	<b>Continuous learning and improvement</b>				
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?			Whilst lessons have been learned from complaints, these have not been formally recorded.	Ensure the quarterly report to the Performance Committee specifically sets this out.
	How do we share these lessons with:  a) residents?  b) the board/governing body?  c) In the Annual Report?			As above	We will ensure this is built into regular reports to all stakeholders. The annual complaints report will be considered by the Performance Committee and the Trustee Board in June

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			YMCA St Paul's Group	
	Yes	No	Current position	Action required
				2021 and each June thereafter.
Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	✓			
What changes have we made?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We have made changes to our reporting system</li> <li>- We reviewed and updated our policy</li> <li>- We will train relevant service managers on the code and our revised policy</li> <li>- We will seek further feedback from our residents on how they feel our policy is working</li> <li>- We will ensure better internal and external reporting mechanisms are in place and lessons learned are communicated appropriately.</li> </ul> <p>We are a learning organisation and as such will continue to review and revise our processes and training to staff as necessary.</p>	