

Self-Assessment against Complaint Handling Code 2021

1	Definition of a complaint	Compliant Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	<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>	The definition is clearly stated within SLH's Customer Feedback Policy which was last reviewed in 2021.	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Feedback Policy • SLH website
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	Detailed in sections 4.1.2 on pages 4 to 5 of the policy.	
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents? Evidence relied upon	There was engagement with the SLH scrutiny panel before approval of the Customer Feedback Policy.	
2	Accessibility	Compliant Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	Detailed in section 4.1.3 of the policy.	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Feedback Policy • SLH website • Equality &
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	Information is available on SLH's website.	
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	Outlined in the Equality & Diversity Policy.	

	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	Information on how to make a complaint is listed on the SLH Website. A 12 week social media campaign on promoting customer feedback ran from February 2021, one of the aims of the campaign was to clarify the complaints process for tenants. In addition, the SLH Bulletin provides high level information on complaint performance and how tenants can make a complaint.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity Policy SLH Bulletin
3	Complaints team and process	Compliant Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	Whilst all complaints are dealt with by relevant managers, the Performance Officer and Quality & Performance Manager assesses and manages the complaints process to ensure consistency of complaint handling.	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer feedback procedure Stage 2 letter template Complaints quality checks
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	The Quality and Performance Manager has this ability to do so but would need to follow the correct procedure. Predominately the complaints would always be investigated by specific managers.	
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	Complaints are assigned to managers and closely monitored to ensure, when appropriate, inter departmental engagement to attempt to resolve the complaint.	
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?	N/A	
	Is any third stage optional for residents?	N/A	

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	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	The final response letter provided after a Stage 2 complaint details the complainant's rights and timescales required for Housing Ombudsman escalation.	
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	All documents are attached to the complaint within the housing management software. Quality checks carried out by Performance Officer to ensure all letters are attached.	
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?	Between September 2020 – August 2021 Stage 1 - 81.6% of all complaints have been resolved at this stage. Stage 2 resolutions 6.7% 11.7% complaints were withdrawn	
4	Communication	Compliant Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	Complaints are acknowledged within two working days by the Performance Officer, which includes details of who will be dealing with the complaint and a leaflet outlining the process. The complaints process has an emphasis on personal contact with the customer to try and resolve the matter.	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Feedback Policy • Stage 1 and 2 letter templates • Monthly Customer Feedback Report • Complaints quality checks
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	Yes, unless there were extenuating or exceptional circumstances.	

<p>Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?</p>	<p>Complaints are acknowledged within two working days. Any cases when this has not occurred are exceptions where a complaint may not have been logged or allocated correctly on the housing management system. In instances such as this the complainant is contacted immediately. Between September 2020 – August 2021 97.8% of all complaints have been acknowledged within timescales.</p>
<p>Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?</p>	<p>When complaints are acknowledged, a Customer Feedback leaflet is shared with complainants; this details the full complaints process. Stage 1 and 2 template letters advise of the complainant's options at both stages if they remain dissatisfied.</p>
<p>What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?</p>	<p>Between September 2020 – August 2021, 81.6% of complaints are resolved at stage one.</p>
<p>What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?</p>	<p>Between September 2020 – August 2021, 6.7% of complaints are resolved at stage two</p>
<p>What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one • Stage one (with extension) • Stage two • Stage two (with extension) 	<p>Between September 2020 – August 2021: Stage one – 71.3% Stage one (with extension) – 28.7% Stage two - 100%</p>

	<p>Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?</p>	<p>This should only be done in extenuating circumstances, such as when further information is required from an external partner, when further investigation is required for a complex case, when a colleague is absent, when requested to do so by the complainant or when the Complaint Manager is unable to engage with the complainant to get a full understanding of their issues. The Complaint Manager must contact the customer to agree an extension, confirming the reason for this, agree a revised response date with the customer and update the event log accordingly. Where the Complaint Manager is unable to contact the customer because the complainant is not engaging, a complaint holding letter should be sent, advising that the complaint has been extended to allow the complainant further time to get in touch and advise that if there has still been no contact by the extension date, a response will be issued then to avoid any further delays.</p>
	<p>Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?</p>	<p>Our Customer Feedback policy states that should the investigating manager require additional time to review the complaint then a letter will need to be sent confirming the arranged date and reasons for the extension. This is now one of the checks completed during quality checks.</p>
	<p>What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction</p>	<p>Between September 2020 and August 2021 100% of customers were satisfied with how their complaint had been handled.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service</p>	<p>Compliant Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

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	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	There have been no cases to report in the last 12 months however SLH will always engage promptly with the IHO	
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	N/A	
6	Fairness in complaint handling	Compliant Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	Providing the correct level of authority has been granted then yes. If it is a complaint made via an appointed solicitor then this is not covered with the complaints policy and it dealt with via company legal representatives.	
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	Between September 2020 and August 2021 100% of customers were satisfied with how their complaint had been handled.	
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate? What was the reason for refusal?	Between September 2020 and August 2021 we refused to escalate one complaint due to the request being made over three months after the complaint closed.	
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	Yes.	

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7	Outcomes and remedies	Compliant Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	Identification of policy or service failure and root cause of the complaint is carried out as part of the complaint investigation. Any learnings as a result of the complaint are documented with the service manager to investigate and implement improvements when appropriate. This is collated in a report that is shared with EMT and Scrutiny Panel for comment/follow up.	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Feedback report
8	Continuous Learning and Improvement	Compliant Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gas safety check certificates are now emailed to tenants where an email address is available • Officers are to consider whether arrears escalation letters should be personalised • Colleagues were given training to ensure that tenants are given accurate information and are updated on the status of their repair accordingly • Chargeable repairs will not be raised until the home has been visited by an AHS colleague to verify the repair • All home due to be re-let will be jointly inspected by SLH and AHS prior to being let 	Evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Feedback Report • Website • Bulletin

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	<p>How do we share these lessons with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) residents? b) the board/governing body? c) In the Annual Report? 	<p>Our bi-annual Bulletin and Scrutiny Panel. Learning outcomes were included within the 12 week social media campaign on promoting customer feedback. Annual complaints summary report. Included in annual report.</p>
	<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
	<p>What changes have we made?</p>	<p>Definition amended and policy now on website. Strengthened quality checks to ensure that all aspects of our policy are being adhered to.</p>