

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form

Dolphin Living Limited, completed 16th November 2020

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code				
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No	Comments & Recommendations
	<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		
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	x		Section 2 of Dolphin Living's Complaints Policy sets out what is consider.
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?	x		<p>Evidence relied upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exclusions are in line with the Code. • Other housing association policies. • Guidance from the Housing Ombudsman website.
2	Accessibility			
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	x		Complaints can be made by telephone, in writing, electronically, in person and

				through a third party. This is clearly set out
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?		x	Currently the complaints policy can be requested from the Property Manager or Customer Services Manager.
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?		x	There are no reasonable adjustments within Dolphin's policy. Dolphin reviews the policy every 3 years and makes reasonable adjustments in relation to complaints and amends its Complaints policy to reflect good practice and industry standards.
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	x		Dolphin have done this periodically and it is referenced in the annual newsletter and on the customer portal.
3	Complaints team and process			
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	x		Dolphin Living's size means it is not feasible to have a designated role for complaints. The current approach of placing responsibility for managing complaints with the Customer Services Manager at our managing agent in the first instance is the right one.
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	x		Customer Services Manager is expected to resolve complaints at Stage 1.
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	x		All staff are expected to work with our managing agent colleagues to manage and resolve complaints at Stage 1.
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?		x	Currently Dolphin Living has a two-stage process for handling complaints.

				If the tenant remains unsatisfied or matter unresolved, we encourage a tenant to raise the matter directly to the appropriate Ombudsman (Housing or Property). This remains the most appropriate complaint management process for Dolphin's size and management structure.
	Is any third stage optional for residents?		x	No. Dolphin have reviewed this and believe the existing two stage process is the right approach.
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	x		This is made clear in the 2 nd stage response.
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	x		Both Dolphin and the managing agent maintain a record of all complaints and communications.
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?	Stage 1		Stage 1
4	Communication			
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	x		Yes, residents are kept up to date and informed of the complaint raised.
	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		Yes
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	x		Yes
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	x		
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?			81% (data for 2019/20)
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?			16% (data for 2019/20)

	<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) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one – 16% resolved within 10 days Stage one (with extension) – 50% resolved by day 20, 12% resolved by day 21. 78% resolved within 21 days. Delays in response were agreed with residents. Complaints are closed once outstanding maintenance issues are completed. • Stage two – 67% Stage two (with extension) <p>Dolphin’s current complaints policy timescales differ from those recommended in the Code.</p> <p>Based on the housing and property management structure, Dolphin believe the current timescales are the rights ones for us and we do not propose to change them at this time. The response timescales are:</p> <p>Acknowledgement – 2 working days Stage 1 – within 21 working days Stage 2 – within 20 working days</p> <p>The new timescales will be kept under review and Dolphin will look to update the policy and improve response timescales during 2021/22.</p>
--	--	--	--

	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	x		Mixed response, depending on what complaint matter.
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	x		Yes throughout the process residents are kept informed.
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction	81%		
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service			
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	x		Yes
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	n/a		Response timescales were not requested.
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?	n/a		All cases escalated were in line with the Complaints policy.
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	X		Yes, the decision was clearly explained.
7	Outcomes and remedies			
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	x		
8	Continuous learning and improvement			
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?	x		If a complaint is upheld or partially upheld, we are clear on how we will improve the service as a result of the complaint raised.
	How do we share these lessons with: a) Residents b) The board/ governing body c) In the Annual report	x		Dolphin review this internally and lessons learned are included on complaint updates to colleagues and the Board.

				<p>a) Residents - We share this with the resident who raises the complaint.</p> <p>b) the board/governing body - We inform the board if there are any specific improvements.</p> <p>c) In the Annual Report – we will review our approach in line with the code and its objectives for 2021/22 for Dolphin Living Limited.</p>
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	x		<p>Yes. There are a number of recommendations and changes to our current approach including:</p> <p>Improve overall promotion of the Complaints policy to residents.</p> <p>Ensure we respond on a timely manner to residents providing them clear and concise updates.</p>
	What changes have we made?	x		We have updated our timeframe for responses for stage one decisions.