

### Housing Ombudsman Self-assessment

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and it must be reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body at least annually.

Once approved, landlords must publish the self-assessment as part of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report on their website. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.

Landlords are required to complete the self-assessment in full and support all statements with evidence, with additional commentary as necessary.

We recognise that there may be a small number of circumstances where landlords are unable to meet the requirements, for example, if they do not have a website. In these circumstances, we expect landlords to deliver the intentions of the Code in an alternative way, for example by publishing information in a public area so that it is easily accessible.

## 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	Point 8 in our Complaints policy - published on both South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse websites: <a href="#">Vale Complaints Policy</a> <a href="#">South Complaints Policy</a>	We have adopted the Housing Ombudsman definition for both a service request and a complaint.
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	Point 6 and Point 11 in our Complaints policy	Complainant does not need to use the word ‘complaint’ to have a formal complaint. We require signed confirmation from the complainant to accept a complaint from a third party.
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	Yes	Point 8 in our Complaints policy - published on both South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse websites: <a href="#">Vale Complaints Policy</a> <a href="#">South Complaints Policy</a>	We have adopted the Housing Ombudsman definition for both a service request and a complaint.

	recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.			
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	Point 14 in our complaints policy - published on both South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse websites: <a href="#">Vale Complaints Policy</a> <a href="#">South Complaints Policy</a>	Complainants have the option at any time to escalate to the formal complaints procedure if they are dissatisfied with response to service request.
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		Housing Compliance Team will respond to comments made on housing related surveys of satisfaction and contact tenants to discuss. Guidance for how to make a complaint is in the process of being added to all surveys hosted by Councils.

## 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	Point 15 in our Complaints policy and Appendix 1 for examples of when our formal complaints procedure cannot be used.	This is stated in our complaints policy. Complaints are managed by the corporate complaints team in consultation with the service team. Refusals to be recorded on complaints database and will be recorded in annual report to Joint Audit & Governance Committee.
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> <p>1.1 The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	Yes	Point 15 in our Complaints policy and Appendix 1 for examples of when our formal complaints procedure cannot be used	This is stated in our complaints policy. Complaints are managed by the corporate complaints team in consultation with the service team. Refusals to be recorded on complaints database and will be recorded in annual report to Joint Audit & Governance Committee.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.</li> </ul>			
2.3	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.	Yes	Point 14 in our Complaints policy and Appendix 1 – Point 9	We will normally expect a complaint to be raised within 12 months of an issue occurring or the complainant becoming aware of the issue; however, we will consider complaints after this period if it is appropriate to do so and will consider each complaint according to its own circumstances.
2.4	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 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.	Yes	Point 14 in our Complaints policy	This is stated in our complaints policy. Complaints are managed by the corporate complaints team in consultation with the service team. Refusals to be recorded on complaints database and will be recorded in annual report to Joint Audit & Governance Committee.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Point 15 in our Complaints policy	Each complaint is assessed on its own basis following the process outlined in the policy.

### 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>Point 9-13 in our Complaints policy.</p> <p>Point 10. "We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate, and as a landlord we must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed with our tenants, as well as a record of any disabilities a tenant has disclosed. Please make us aware if you need support to make a service request or formal complaint."</p>	<p>Complaints can be made using our online form, over the phone, by email and in person.</p> <p>We offer assistance to make adjustments for those with accessibility needs.</p> <p>A complainant is able to have a complaint put forward by a third party with the permission and agreement of the tenant.</p> <p>Equality, disability, and Discrimination training is a mandatory requirement for all council staff.</p>
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>Point 9 in our Complaints policy.</p> <p>Basic training on complaints and what to do if you receive one forms part of our staff induction process.</p> <p>All staff comms has been issued with guidance in our 'Team Talk' newsletter</p>	<p>We plan to include a complaints module on our staff training site LEAH and make this mandatory for all staff to complete.</p> <p>In the short term we are informing all staff of changes to complaint handling via our staff newsletter</p> <p>Specific training for housing staff needed.</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	Point 1 in our Complaints policy  Included within our training for complaints handling staff  To be included in mandatory training for all staff	Customer feedback (compliments, comments, and complaints) is important to us, and we want you to tell us when you think we have got something wrong, so we can endeavour to put it right and learn from it how we can improve our services in future.
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	Complaints policy published on our websites	Our Complaints policy is available to all residents. It is published on our websites and details the two-stage process. Complaint information including the complaints policy is included in rent agreement and tenant pack.
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	Point 37 and 38 in our Complaints policy	Section in policy "Monitoring and reporting complaints data"
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	Point 11 & 13 in our complaints policy	Complainants may be accompanied/represented by a friend or advocate at any time.  With signed confirmation a complaint can be submitted on a complainants' behalf by their chosen representative.

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>Point 29-31 in our complaints policy</p> <p>Our standard response wording for all complaints at each stage includes this information, and all staff responding to complaints are required to use this wording which is published on our staff intranet</p>	
-----	--	-----	---	--



## 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	This is our corporate complaints team – as part of training for staff they are made aware of this and our complaint-handling process, which requires that all complaints are referred to our corporate team to be managed in accordance with our policy – see attached slides	Corporate complaints are handled by a dedicated team within Customer Service Centre, of which includes a registered Link Officer who will liaise with the LGSCO/HO
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	This is part of our standard process and complaint-handling culture - it is demonstrated in practice by our weekly report of corporate complaints – see attached	Our Senior Management Team (SMT) provides oversight of our complaints and the complaints team reports to the senior management team on a weekly basis.
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	Point 1 and 4 in our policy  Included within our training for complaints handling staff  Our corporate complaints team consists of 2 senior customer service officers and 2 customer	Also to be included in mandatory training for all staff  Our corporate complaints team which is part of our Customer Service Centre, consists of 2 senior

			service team leaders – see attached Job Descriptions for these roles	customer service officers and 2 customer service team leaders, all of whom are able to deputise for each other and manage complaints to avoid delay
--	--	--	--	---

## 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	In our complaints policy on South & Vale websites  <a href="#">Vale Complaints Policy</a> <a href="#">South Complaints Policy</a>	
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	In our complaints policy on South & Vale websites  <a href="#">Vale Complaints Policy</a> <a href="#">South Complaints Policy</a>  Report to SMT on the implications of the new Code	The formal complaints process is two stages. Stage 1 and stage 2 is followed in accordance with the Code.  Previous practice in some teams has been to accept 'informal' complaints – the change has been endorsed by our SMT and will be reinforced by staff comms, content on our staff intranet and staff training
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	In our complaints policy on South & Vale websites  <a href="#">Vale Complaints Policy</a> <a href="#">South Complaints Policy</a>	The formal complaints process is two stages. Stage 1 and stage 2 is followed in accordance with the Code.  Previous practice in some teams has been to accept

			Report to SMT on the implications of the new Code	'informal' complaints – the change has been endorsed by our SMT and will be reinforced by staff comms, content on our staff intranet and staff training
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	Point 16 in our Complaints policy  Report to SMT on the implications of the new Code	Complaints will be investigated and responded to by the relevant service manager with input from our contractor or partner where relevant. Contractors/partners will be able to respond to service requests but all complaints must be responded to by the relevant council team
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes		Complaints will be investigated and responded to by the relevant service manager with input from our contractor or partner where relevant. Contractors/partners will be able to respond to service requests but all complaints must be responded to by the relevant council team
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the	Yes	Point 17 in our Complaints policy	When we acknowledge a complaint, we will check to make sure that we have

	complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as “the complaint definition”. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.			understood the complaint fully and may seek clarity on the information provided, or extra information before the stage one or stage two investigation can begin.
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	Point 15 & 17 in our Complaints policy	
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;</li> <li>b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position;</li> <li>c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and</li> <li>d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.</li> </ul>	Yes		This is part of our complaints process and included within our training for complaints handling staff
5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for	Yes	Point 14 in our Complaints policy	Managed by the Corporate complaints team who will write to the complainant before the deadline to inform of a revised date – any extension will be limited to 10 working days

	keeping them informed about their complaint.			after the original due date. This will be managed through workflow on our newly purchased complaints CRM module
5.10	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.	Yes		<p>Complaints can be made using our online form, over the phone, by email and in person.</p> <p>We offer assistance to make adjustments for those with accessibility needs.</p> <p>A complainant is able to have a complaint put forward by a third party with the permission and agreement of the tenant.</p> <p>Equality, disability, and Discrimination training is a mandatory requirement for all council staff.</p>
5.11	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.	Yes	Point 22 in our Complaints policy	In a small number of circumstances, the complaint may be escalated straight to stage two. This includes a complaint about the procedure followed during a Code of Conduct complaint, but not for review of the Monitoring Officer's decision.

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	Complaints file on the corporate complaints database – staff are required to save all documentation relating to a complaint in the relevant file	All correspondence at each stage is saved in the resident's complaint casefile which links to our complaints database.
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		All complaints-handling staff have the authority to agree non-financial remedies and all of the councils' Head of Service have authority to agree financial remedies.
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	Point 36 in our Complaints policy	We have a separate policy for dealing with vexatious and unreasonable behaviour which is currently under review <a href="#">Vale - Vexatious and unreasonable behaviour policy</a> <a href="#">South - Vexatious and unreasonable behaviour policy</a>
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	Point 10 – In the vexatious and unreasonable behaviour policy	This policy is currently under review to ensure that it complies with the provisions of the Code

## 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	Point 20 & 27 in our complaints policy	<p>Stage One responded to within 10 working days of our acknowledgement.</p> <p>Stage Two responded to within 20 working days.</p>
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <b><u>within five working days of the complaint being received</u></b> .	Yes	Point 15 in our Complaints policy	This is currently tracked manually by the complaints team but will in future be managed through workflow on our dedicated CRM module
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <b><u>within 10 working days</u></b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Point 20 in our Complaints policy	This is currently tracked manually by the complaints team but will in future be managed through workflow on our dedicated CRM module
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.	Yes		Managed by the Corporate complaints team who will write to the complainant before the deadline to inform of a revised date – any extension will be



	Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.			limited to 10 working days after the original due date. This will be managed through workflow on our newly purchased complaints CRM module
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	Included within our standard wording template	This is included as part of our standard template wording that officers must use when responding to Stage One complaints.
6.6	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Point 33 in our Complaints policy	Actions required will be recorded on our dedicated complaints database and processes will be in place to ensure these actions are completed and a corporate record kept.
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	Included within our standard wording template	This is included as part of our standard template wording that officers must use when responding to Stage One complaints.
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	Yes	Point 23 in our Complaints policy	

	has been issued, the new 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.			
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"> <li>a. the complaint stage;</li> <li>b. the complaint definition;</li> <li>c. the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>d. the reasons for any decisions made;</li> <li>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</li> <li>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</li> <li>g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.</li> </ul>	Yes	In our Complaints policy	<p>This is included as part of our standard template wording that officers must use when responding to Stage One complaints.</p> <p>All responses are checked and validated by a Corporate Complaints officer before sending.</p>

## 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	Point 24 of our Complaints policy	

6.11	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.	Yes	Point 27 of our Complaints policy	
6.12	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.	Yes	Point 24 of our Complaints policy	
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	In our Complaints policy	Stage One – Service Manager Stage Two – Head of Service
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <b><u>within 20 working days</u></b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Point 27 of our Complaints policy	
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		Managed by the Corporate complaints team who will write to the complainant before the deadline to inform of a revised date – any extension will be limited to 10 working days after the original due date. This will be managed through workflow on our newly purchased complaints CRM module
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these	Yes		This is included as part of our standard template wording

	timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.			that officers must use when responding to Stage One complaints.
6.17	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes		Actions required will be recorded on our dedicated complaints database and processes will be in place to ensure these actions are completed and a corporate record is kept.
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		This is included as part of our standard template wording that officers must use when responding to Stage Two complaints.
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"> <li>a. the complaint stage;</li> <li>b. the complaint definition;</li> <li>c. the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>d. the reasons for any decisions made;</li> <li>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</li> <li>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</li> <li>g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.</li> </ul>	Yes		<p>This is included as part of our standard template wording that officers must use when responding to Stage Two complaints.</p> <p>All responses are checked and validated by a Corporate Complaints officer before sending.</p>

6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	In our complaints policy	Part of our standard process for Stage Two. Stage two is the final response before advising the complainant of their right to contact the Ombudsman.

## 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"> <li>• Apologising;</li> <li>• Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;</li> <li>• Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;</li> <li>• Taking action if there has been delay;</li> <li>• Reconsidering or changing a decision;</li> <li>• Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;</li> <li>• Providing a financial remedy;</li> <li>• Changing policies, procedures or practices.</li> </ul>	Yes	Point 32 & 33 of our Complaints policy	All responses are checked and validated by a Corporate Complaints officer before sending.
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes		All complaints-handling staff have the authority to agree non-financial remedies and all of the councils Head of Service have authority to agree financial remedies.

				These are considered on a case-by-case basis.
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		This will be managed through workflow on our newly purchased complaints CRM module
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes		We refer to the Ombudsman guidance when considering remedies

## Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.</li> <li>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;</li> <li>c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;</li> <li>d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;</li> <li>e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and</li> <li>f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>Point 37 in our Complaints policy</p> <p>Annual report to the councils' Joint Audit &amp; Governance Committee</p>	



8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and 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.	Yes	This is published on Joint Audit and Governance Committee webpages.  <a href="#">South JAGC</a> <a href="#">Vale JAGC</a>	Link to the published report on the website alongside the Joint Audit & Governance Committee minutes
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes		This is standard practice of the councils
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes		Yes, we would follow direction of the Ombudsman if requested to following an Ombudsman investigation.
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		This is included in our service areas' business continuity plans.

## 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		This will be managed through workflow on our newly purchased complaints CRM module
9.2	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.	Yes	Point 1 of our Complaints policy	
9.3	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.	Yes		We follow a corporate process, which involves internal quarterly review meetings.
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Yes		Our housing team have a compliance officer who is responsible for monitoring these.

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		This is our respective portfolio holders for Customer Services for both councils.
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		The respective portfolio holders for Customer Services will present this information as part of the councils' formal governance processes.
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;</li> <li>b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;</li> <li>c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and</li> </ul>	Yes		This is provided to the MRC monthly as part of our portfolio update.

	d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.			
9.8	<p>Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</li> <li>b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and</li> <li>c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.</li> </ul>	Yes	Point 1 of our Complaints policy	