

Appendix B – Self-Assessment Form

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and discussed at the landlord's governing body annually. Evidence should be included to support all statements with additional commentary as necessary.

Explanations must also be provided where a mandatory 'must' requirement is not met to set out the rationale for the alternative approach adopted and why this delivers a better outcome.

Section 1 - Definition of a complaint

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
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 organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.'</i>	Yes	This is covered in our Complaints Policy at the link below. https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24248/Social-housing-complaints
1.3	The resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must still be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.	Yes	Included on our website here - https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/11802/Complaints-and-compliments "You don't have to use the word 'complaint' for your feedback to be treated as such. We'll also ensure that any feedback submitted via a third party, or a representative is handled in line with our complaints policy." The Housing Ombudsman's definition of what is a complaint is included in the Council's complaints policy. The following has also been included in the Council's revised complaints policy – "A complaint that is submitted via a third party or a representative will also be handled in line with the Council's complaints policy".
1.6	... if further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter, or if the resident requests it, the issue must be logged as a complaint.	Yes	Our complaints policy outlines our process clearly.
1.7	A landlord must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so.	Yes	Included in the Council's complaints policy in section 'what is a complaint'.

1.8	A complaints policy must clearly set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered, and these circumstances should be fair and reasonable to residents.	Yes	Included in the Council's complaints policy in section 'what is a complaint' https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24249/What-is-a-complaint
1.9	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed 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.	Yes	Included in the Council's complaints policy in section 'what is a complaint' https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24249/What-is-a-complaint

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.4	Landlords should recognise the difference between a service request , where a resident may be unhappy with a situation that they wish to have rectified, and a complaint about the service they have/have not received.	Yes	The difference between a service request and a complaint is explained on our website here - https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/11802/Complaints-and-compliments
1.5	Survey feedback may not necessarily need to be treated as a complaint, though, where possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue their dissatisfaction as a complaint if they wish to.	No	Surveys do not inform respondents about how to make a complaint.

Section 2 - Accessibility and awareness

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which residents can make a complaint such as in person, over the telephone, in writing, by email and digitally. While the Ombudsman recognises that it may not be feasible for a landlord to use all of the potential channels, there must be more than one route of access into the complaints system.	Yes	Complaints web page outlines the different ways a customer can access the complaints process. https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/11802/Complaints-and-compliments
2.3	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the number of stages involved, what will happen at each stage and the timeframes for responding.	Yes	Policy is available via the website. https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24248/Social-housing-complaints
2.4	Landlord websites, if they exist, must include information on how to raise a complaint. The complaints policy and process must be easy to find on the website.	Yes	Council website has a page dedicated to complaints which includes all relevant information on complaints. https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/11802/Complaints-and-compliments
2.5	Landlords must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and may need to adapt normal policies, procedures, or processes to accommodate an individual's needs. Landlords must satisfy themselves that their policy sets out how they will respond to reasonable adjustments requests in line with the Equality Act and that complaints handlers have had appropriate training to deal with such requests.	Yes	Policy is subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. Internal housing system provides a notification if we are aware that the account holder requires any additional support, for example, mental health issues, disabilities, etc. Internal training material will be reviewed regarding responding to deal with reasonable adjustment requests.

<p>2.6</p>	<p>Landlords must publicise the complaints policy and process, the Complaint Handling Code and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme in leaflets, posters, newsletters, online and as part of regular correspondence with residents.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Information relating to the complaint handling code and Housing Ombudsman service is promoted in resident newsletters. In June 2023, a newsletter was sent to all 18,000 residents.</p> <p>Going forward, details will be included in internal electronic newsletter and any newsletters.</p> <p>Learning from complaints and best practice from the HO is regularly discussed and will be a regular standard agenda item at monthly Resident Influence Panel meetings.</p>
<p>2.7</p>	<p>Landlords must provide residents with contact information for the Ombudsman as part of its regular correspondence with residents.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>See also response to 2.6.</p> <p>Details of the Housing Ombudsman are included with every letter we issue at each stage of the complaints process. We also publicise details within our complaints policy and our updated 'complaints and compliments' page on the Council's website and in complaints policy.</p> <p>Details were included in recent newsletter as mentioned above.</p> <p>Also covered within training material for colleagues to relay to customers.</p>
<p>2.8</p>	<p>Landlords must provide early advice to residents regarding their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service throughout their complaint, not only when the landlord's complaints process is exhausted.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Details of the Housing Ombudsman are included with every letter we issue at each stage of the complaints process.</p> <p>Also covered here: https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/11802/Complaints-and-compliments</p>

			<p>“You can contact the Housing Ombudsman at any point during our complaints process for independent advice and support. We will include information about the Housing Ombudsman, and how to get in touch with them, with any formal written responses during our complaints process.”</p>
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Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.2	Where a landlord has set up channels to communicate with its residents via social media, then it should expect to receive complaints via those channels. Policies should contain details of the steps that will be taken when a complaint is received via social media and how confidentiality and privacy will be maintained.	Yes	Any complaint received will be handled in line with the Council's complaints policy, regardless of the channel via which the complaint was received. Complaints received via social media are handled in the same way as complaints received via other channels.

Section 3 - Complaint handling personnel

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
3.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling to ensure complaints receive the necessary attention, and that these are reported to the governing body. This Code will refer to that person or team as the "complaints officer".	Yes	<p>Each team within the wider Housing Service at Gateshead Council has dedicated officers responsible for collecting feedback and registering complaints. Each officer receives training and has access to up-to-date training guides at all times online. These teams are also supported by a Customer Feedback and Insights Officer who oversees policy, procedure and training. We would consider the Customer Feedback and Insights Officer to be our complaints officer.</p> <p>Complaints which require investigation are assigned to a senior officer or customer care officer to coordinate the investigation and response which is monitored by the Customer Feedback and Insights officer. At the final stage of our complaints process, a complaint is reviewed independently by the chief executive. A senior manager in Legal and Corporate Services is responsible for managing this process. This officer is also the Link Officer for the Housing Ombudsman and reports complaints issues to the Council's Monitoring Officer and submits an Annual Corporate Complaints Report to the Council's Cabinet.</p>
3.2	...the complaint handler appointed must have appropriate complaint handling skills and no conflicts of interest.	Yes	Complaints are investigated and responded to by a senior member of staff with relevant experience. Complaints in the first instance are usually investigated by the service that the complaint relates to. Reviews of complaints are undertaken by the Chief Executive, which ensures impartiality.

			<p>A senior manager in Legal and Corporate Services is responsible for managing this process. This officer is also the Link Officer for the Housing Ombudsman and reports complaints issues to the Council's Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>Our Customer Feedback and Insight officer regularly reviews training material available to colleagues and provides direct training to colleagues both routinely and when there is a change to procedure.</p>
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Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
3.3	<p>Complaint handlers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be able to act sensitively and fairly • be trained to handle complaints and deal with distressed and upset residents • have access to staff at all levels to facilitate quick resolution of complaints • have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes quickly and fairly. 	Yes	Complaints are investigated and responded to by an officer with the relevant experience and training. The officer will be in a position to resolve any issues and/or offer any redress as appropriate.

Section 4 - Complaint handling principles

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.1	Any decision to try and resolve a concern must be taken in agreement with the resident and a landlord's audit trail/records should be able to demonstrate this. Landlords must ensure that efforts to resolve a resident's concerns do not obstruct access to the complaints procedure or result in any unreasonable delay. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'pre-complaint stage') as this causes unnecessary confusion for residents. When a complaint is made, it must be acknowledged and logged at stage one of the complaints procedure within five days of receipt.	Yes	<p>Gateshead Council now have a simplified 2 stage complaints process. The Council's complaints policy has been updated and is available on the council's website here:</p> <p>https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24248/Social-housing-complaints</p> <p>Our Customer Feedback and Insight Officer has updated training material and mandatory training outlining the changes to the process has been rolled out to all colleagues responsible for complaints.</p> <p>A team briefing has been circulated to all housing colleagues to outline the changes.</p>

4.2	Within the complaint acknowledgement, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	Yes	Acknowledgement template prompts the investigating officer to set out their understanding of the complaint so far and that they'll contact the complainant to discuss and give them an opportunity to clarify or add anything before agreeing next steps and conducting investigation.
4.6	A complaint investigation must be conducted in an impartial manner.	Yes	<p>During stage 1 of the complaints process, the complaint will be investigated by the service being complained about. This allows for expertise at how to solve specific problems which you wouldn't get at an independent review at this stage.</p> <p>If the service is unable to provide a resolution, the next stage is a review undertaken by the Chief Executive which is impartial and independent from the service being complained about.</p> <p>Also outlined in the Council's updated complaints policy under 'Equal opportunities and human rights.'</p>
4.7	<p>The complaint handler must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deal with complaints on their merits • act independently and have an open mind • take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest • consider all information and evidence carefully • keep the complaint confidential as far as possible, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter. 	Yes	<p>See 4.6 for evidencing that impartiality is assured with an independent review at the final stage.</p> <p>If a conflict of interest is identified, the appropriate measures will be put in place to allocate a new complaints handler.</p>
4.11	Landlords must adhere to any reasonable arrangements agreed with residents in terms of frequency and method of communication	Yes	Covered in our following the complaint process training document which is available to all officers. Also mentioned here: https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/11802/Complaints-and-compliments

<p>4.12</p>	<p>The resident, and if applicable any staff member who is the subject of the complaint, must also be given a fair chance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out their position • comment on any adverse findings before a final decision is made. 	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Our acknowledgement letter prompts the complaint handler to outline their understanding of the complaint, they would then contact the complainant to confirm their understanding is correct and provide the opportunity for the complainant to discuss the complaint. It's current practice to contact the complainant to discuss findings and remedies ahead of issuing a final written response.</p> <p>Similarly, if a staff member is the subject of a complaint, they will be given a chance to discuss the matter with the investigating officer.</p>
<p>4.13</p>	<p>A landlord must include in its complaints policy its timescales for a resident to request escalation of a complaint</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>This is covered in our complains policy here:</p> <p>https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24248/Social-housing-complaints</p>
<p>4.14</p>	<p>A landlord must not unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The reasons that the council wouldn't accept a complaint are outlined in the complaints policy here:</p> <p>https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24249/What-is-a-complaint</p>

	procedure and must have clear and valid reasons for taking that course of action. Reasons for declining to escalate a complaint must be clearly set out in a landlord's complaints policy and must be the same as the reasons for not accepting a complaint.		
4.15	A full record must be kept of the complaint, any review 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 reports or surveys prepared.	Yes	This information is recorded on the NEC Housing System.
4.18	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives when pursuing a complaint.	Yes	An unacceptable behaviour policy is included in the complaints policy and is also accessible via the complaints intranet page. https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24258/Appendix-1 Gateshead Intranet - Challenging behaviour guidance

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.3	Landlords should manage residents' expectations from the outset, being clear where a desired outcome is unreasonable or unrealistic	Yes	This is included in the training and guidance.
4.4	A complaint should be resolved at the earliest possible opportunity, having assessed what evidence is needed to fully consider the issues, what outcome would resolve the matter for the resident and whether there are any urgent actions required.	Yes	We outline in our complaints process training document that a response to the complaint should be issued as early as possible and that complaints should not be kept open unnecessarily and a response delayed.
4.5	Landlords should 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 where this is reasonable.	Yes	This is included in the policy. Corporate complaints policy (social housing) - Gateshead Council

4.8	Where a key issue of a complaint relates to the parties' legal obligations landlords should clearly set out their understanding of the obligations of both parties.		Requires further clarification. Some complaints are excluded from the Council's corporate complaints procedure, including those in areas where other statutory procedures, rights of appeal or legal remedies already exist. For example, many social services complaints are subject to a statutory procedure
4.9	Communication with the resident should not generally identify individual members of staff or contractors.	No	This is not specifically mentioned in the guidance.
4.10	Landlords should keep residents regularly updated about the progress of the investigation.	Yes	This is included in the guidance.
4.16	Landlords should seek feedback from residents in relation to the landlord's complaint handling as part of the drive to encourage a positive complaint and learning culture.	Yes	Customer satisfaction with the Council's approach to complaint handling is measured as part of our Tenant Satisfaction Survey carried out and reported on annually.
4.17	Landlords should recognise the impact that being complained about can have on future service delivery. Landlords should ensure that staff are supported and engaged in the complaints process, including the learning that can be gained	No	Learning from complaints is an area that we have identified as needing to be developed further.
4.19	Any restrictions placed on a resident's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be appropriate to their needs and should demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	An unacceptable behaviour policy is included in the complaints policy and is also accessible via the complaints intranet page. https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24258/Appendix-1 Gateshead Intranet - Challenging behaviour guidance

Section 5 - Complaint stages
Mandatory 'must' requirements
Stage 1

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.1	Landlords must respond to the complaint <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being logged. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	<p>The Council has adopted a two-stage process for all housing related complaints. For stage 1 complaints, we've adopted a 10-day working target.</p> <p>Response timescales are monitored and reported in internally.</p> <p>The Council's complaints policy has been updated and can be found here: https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24248/Social-housing-complaints</p>
5.5	A complaint response must be sent 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 expeditiously with regular updates provided to the resident.	Yes	It's explicitly stated in our complaints process training document that complaints should not be left open, or a response delayed if the answer to the complaint is already known.
5.6	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	This is included in the guidance and response letter template provides guidance on what should be included.
5.8	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage one in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complaint stage • the decision on the complaint • the reasons for any decisions made • the details of any remedy offered to put things right • details of any outstanding actions details of how to escalate the matter to stage two if the resident is not satisfied with the answer	Yes	The response letter template provides guidance on including all of these elements.

Stage 2

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.9	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage one it must be progressed to stage two of the landlord's procedure, unless an exclusion ground now applies. In instances where a landlord declines to escalate a complaint it must clearly communicate in writing its reasons for not escalating as well as the resident's right to approach the Ombudsman about its decision.	Yes	<p>Our two stage complaints policy explains clearly that a complainant can escalate to the next stage if unsatisfied with the outcome of the stage one investigation.</p> <p>We also explain that we will write to a complainant in the event a complaint isn't suitable for our complaints process or for escalation here:</p> <p>https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24248/Social-housing-complaints</p>
5.10	On receipt of the escalation request, landlords must set out their understanding of issues outstanding and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	Yes	Our standard letter template for a stage 2 response outlines our understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking.
5.11	Landlords must only escalate a complaint to stage two once it has completed stage one and at the request of the resident.	Yes	<p>This is included in the policy</p> <p>https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24248/Social-housing-complaints</p>

5.12	The person considering the complaint at stage two, must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage one.	Yes	<p>A review of the complaint will be undertaken by the Chief Executive who is independent and impartial.</p> <p>Included in the Council's updated complaints policy.</p> <p>https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24248/Social-housing-complaints</p>
5.13	Landlords must respond to the stage two complaint within 20 working days of the complaint being escalated. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	<p>This is included in the policy.</p> <p>https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24248/Social-housing-complaints</p>
5.16	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage two in clear, plain language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complaint stage • the complaint definition • the decision on the complaint • the reasons for any decisions made • the details of any remedy offered to put things right • details of any outstanding actions <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the landlord has a third stage, details of how to escalate the matter to stage three • if this was the final stage, details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied. 	Yes	This is covered in our template letter.

Stage 3

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.17	Two stage landlord complaint procedures are ideal. This ensures that the complaint process is not unduly long. If landlords strongly believe a third stage is necessary, they must set out their reasons for this as part of their self-assessment. A process with more than three stages is not acceptable under any circumstances.	Yes	Gateshead Council has a 2 stage complaints process. https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24248/Social-housing-complaints
5.20	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage three in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the complaint stage• the complaint definition• the decision on the complaint• the reasons for any decisions made• the details of any remedy offered to put things right• details of any outstanding actions details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied	Yes	Gateshead Council has a 2 stage process and this information is provided with the final response at stage 2.

**Best practice 'should' requirements
Stage 1**

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.2	If an extension beyond 20 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties	Yes	This is stated in our complaints policy. https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24248/Social-housing-complaints
5.3	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, Yes Information on how to access the Housing Ombudsman Service is provided as part of the complaint acknowledgement letter. landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response	Yes	Information on how to access the Housing Ombudsman Service is provided as part of the complaint acknowledgement letter.
5.4	Where the problem is a recurring issue, the landlord should consider any older reports as part of the background to the complaint if this will help to resolve the issue for the resident.	No	Currently each complaint is dealt with in isolation. This is not included in the policy or guidance.
5.7	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these should be incorporated into the stage one response if they are relevant and the stage one response has not been issued. Where the stage one response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the complaint should be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	This is covered in our complaints policy. https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24248/Social-housing-complaints

Stage 2

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.14	If an extension beyond 10 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.	Yes	This is covered in our complaints policy. https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24248/Social-housing-complaints
5.15	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response	Yes	This is covered in our complaints policy. https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/24248/Social-housing-complaints

Stage 3

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.18	Complaints should only go to a third stage if the resident has actively requested a third stage review of their complaint. Where a third stage is in place and has been requested, landlords must respond to the stage three complaint within 20 working days of the complaint being escalated. Additional time will only be justified if related to convening a panel. An explanation and a date for when the stage three response will be received should be provided to the resident.	Yes	Gateshead Council has a 2 stage complaints process.
5.19	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response.	Yes	Gateshead Council has a 2 stage complaints process.

Section 6 - Putting things right
Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
6.1	Effective dispute resolution requires a process designed to resolve complaints. 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.	Yes	The Council's compensation policy for housing related complaints is based on the Housing Ombudsman's guidance. All complaints are investigated and dealt with based on their individual circumstances.
6.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the extent of any service failures and the level of detriment caused to the resident as a result. A landlord must carefully manage the expectations of residents and not promise anything that cannot be delivered or would cause unfairness to other residents.	Yes	There is guidance on remedy and compensation accessible via the complaints intranet page. Gateshead Intranet - Compensation
6.5	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	When a remedy is offered, the complainant is advised to contact the officer handling their complaint directly to accept/decline (details included in letter) and the timeframe to expect to receive the remedy is confirmed following acceptance. Reports are in place which complaints officer can monitor to see any outstanding complaints.
6.6	In awarding compensation, a landlord must consider whether any statutory payments are due, if any quantifiable losses have been incurred, the time and trouble a resident has been put to as well as any distress and inconvenience caused.	Yes	There is guidance on remedy and compensation accessible via the complaints intranet page. Gateshead Intranet - Compensation

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
6.3	Landlords should look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether anything needs to be 'put right' in terms of process or systems to the benefit of all residents.	No	Learning from complaints is an area that we have identified as needing to be developed further.
6.7	In some cases, a resident may have a legal entitlement to redress. The landlord should still offer a resolution where possible, obtaining legal advice as to how any offer of resolution should be worded.	No	

Section 7 - Continuous learning and improvement

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.2	Accountability and transparency are integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints in their annual report and more frequently to their residents, staff and scrutiny panels.	Yes	<p>We report our annual performance to our residents on our website and in our Tenant Annual Report here - https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/21521/Complaints-and-feedback</p> <p>This outlines the number of complaints received, what they related to and how we've acted to put things right.</p> <p>We'll also be issuing a newsletter to communicate the results of the 2022/2023 tenant satisfaction survey with our residents which will also detail the great work we have underway to improve in areas our residents expressed dissatisfaction.</p> <p>Details of housing related complaints and Housing Ombudsman's determinations are reported annually to the Council's Cabinet as part of the Corporate Complaints and Compliments Procedure Annual Report.</p> <p>Going forward the Residence Influence Panel will receive regular updates on complaint performance and learning from complaints. This will form a regular agenda item.</p>

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.3	A member of the governing body should be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This role will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight to the governing body on the landlord's complaint handling performance.	No	
7.4	<p>As a minimum, governing bodies should receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular updates on the volume, categories and outcome of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance including compliance with the Ombudsman's orders • Regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling, • The annual performance report produced by the Ombudsman, where applicable • Individual complaint outcomes where necessary, including where the Ombudsman made findings of severe maladministration or referrals to regulatory bodies. The implementation of management responses should be tracked to ensure they are delivered to agreed timescales. The annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code for scrutiny and challenge. 	No	

7.5	Any themes or trends should be assessed by senior management to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks or policies and procedures that require revision. They should also be used to inform staff and contractor training.	No	
7.6	Landlords should have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all employees that reflects the need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments • take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints rather than blaming others • act within the Professional Standards for engaging with complaints as set by the Chartered Institute of Housing. 	No	

Section 8 - Self-assessment and compliance

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
8.1	Landlords must carry out an annual self-assessment against the Code to ensure their complaint handling remains in line with its requirements.	Yes	Carried out annually.
8.2	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure and/or change in procedures.	Yes	A further self-assessment, in addition to the annual review, would be carried out in the event of significant restructure or change.
8.3	Following each self-assessment, a landlord must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report the outcome of their self-assessment to their governing body. In the case of local authorities, self-assessment outcomes should be reported to elected members • publish the outcome of their assessment on their website if they have one, or otherwise make accessible to residents include the self-assessment in their annual report section on	Yes	The self-assessment is published on our website. We will update the current version with the updated fully compliant version. Self-assessment document will be included in this year's complaints performance reporting which will be published on our website.

	complaints handling performance		<p>From 2023/2024 the self-assessment against the Code will be carried out by the Customer Feedback and Insights Officer working with the Resident Influence Panel, which comprises of tenants and leaseholders.</p> <p>The completed self-assessment and any actions required to ensure compliance will then be reported to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee providing elected members with the opportunity to ask questions, consider and agree the final version including any remedial actions.</p> <p>The resident Influence Panel will continue to monitor compliance and progress with any required actions. A summary of activity and actions will be included in the Annual Complaints report presented to the Council's Cabinet.</p>
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