

## HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD – 8 MAY 2024

### Report of the landlord services manager

#### ITEM: SELF-ASSESSMENT OF OUR COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES AGAINST THE HOUSING OMBUDSMAN'S COMPLAINT HANDLING CODE

##### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present the board with the outcome of the landlord service's annual self-assessment of its complaints policy and procedures against the Housing Ombudsman's requirements and criteria as set out in its complaints handling code.

##### 2. ACTION REQUESTED

The board is requested to note and invited to comment upon the self-assessment.

##### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In 2020 the Housing Ombudsman service published a code on how social housing landlords should handle complaints made about its services. All social housing landlords are now required to carry out and publish an annual self-assessment on how their complaints policy and procedures meet the code. A copy of the council's complaints policy can be found by following this link: [Complaints policy - Charnwood Borough Council](#) and [Complaints Process - Charnwood Borough Council](#) for its complaints process.
- 3.2 The creation of the complaints handling code was contained originally in the government's white paper on social housing, first published in November 2020. After a revision in the code early in 2022, social landlords had until October 2022 to become fully compliant.
- 3.3 While the code acted initially as a set of mandatory and advisory recommendations, the code was made statutory by virtue of it being incorporated into the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. There is no longer any distinction between requirements that are mandatory and advisory: landlords are expected to comply with all and fully.
- 3.4 The code sets out what tenants can expect from their landlord when they complain. It also provides tenants with information on how to make a complaint and how to, if desired, make progress with it through the landlord's internal complaints process.
- 3.5 The complaint handling code has in it a universal definition of a complaint, creating a positive complaint-handling culture, taking action to put things right and having appropriate remedies available. Its overall aims can be summarised thus:
- To create a national, standardised, uniform approach to complaints handling
  - To ensure good complaint handling by:
    - having effective and fair procedures;
    - having well-trained staff;
    - having well-informed customers;

- aiming to offer early resolutions to put things right;
- having a willingness to learn from outcomes and improve; and
- fostering a positive complaints culture;
- providing a basis for effective scrutiny of the complaints-handling process

3.6 The code is now divided into nine sections as follows:

Section 1:	Definition of a complaint
Section 2:	Exclusions
Section 3:	Accessibility and awareness
Section 4:	Complaint-handling staff
Section 5:	The complaints-handling process
Section 6:	Complaints stages
Section 7:	Putting things right
Section 8:	Self-assessment, reporting and compliance
Section 9:	Scrutiny and oversight: continuous (sic) learning and development

3.7 Although the previous self-assessment was made in August 2024 we are required to complete subsequent self-assessments and submit them to the regulator by 30 June of each year, hence this report has been brought forward to this meeting.

3.8 Presenting this report to HMAB, publishing it on the council's website and putting an article about the self-assessment in the residents' magazine, *Your Homes Matter*, will fulfil our obligation to publish the self-assessment under this code.

3.9 A copy of the landlord service's self-assessment of the ombudsman's code is attached to this report as appendix A. A copy of the code itself can be found through this link: [The Complaint Handling Code | Housing Ombudsman Service \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

#### 4. CHANGES TO COMPLAINTS-HANDLING PROCESS

4.1 Recent changes to the code have required the council to amend its complaints policy. The changes made are as follows:

- Tenants now have up to twelve months rather than six in which to report a complaint;
- Complaints must be logged, defined and acknowledged formally within five working days of the complaint's receipt;
- The [unchanged] ten-day response time now starts from the date of formal acknowledgment, not of the date of receipt of the complaint;
- While one ten-day extension only is still permitted, agreement no longer has to be reached with the complainant to extend; but the extension has to be advised to the complainant in writing, along with an explanation as to why the extension is being applied and giving contact details of the ombudsman;
- The response must be given as soon as the outcome of the investigation has been determined rather than the respondent waiting until any required actions have been carried out.

The council's complaints policy and procedures have been amended to take account of these changes. Training for staff on the changes and general complaints handling has taken place.

## 5. SELF-ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

5.1 A summary of the outcome of our 2024 self-assessment is set out in the table below:

Section	No. criteria	Outcome	
		Compliant	Non-compliant
1	6	Compliant	5
		Non-compliant	1
2	5	Compliant	5
		Non-compliant	0
3	7	Compliant	7
		Non-compliant	0
4	3	Compliant	3
		Non-compliant	0
5	15	Compliant	15
		Non-compliant	0
6 (1)	9	Compliant	9
		Non-compliant	0
6 (2)	11	Compliant	11
		Non-compliant	0
7	4	Compliant	4
		Non-compliant	0
8	5	Compliant	5
		Non-compliant	0
9	8	Compliant	8
		Non-compliant	0

In conclusion, therefore:

All requirements

Compliant	72	98.6 %
Non-compliant	1	1.4 %

## 6. MONITORING AND BENCHMARKING OUR PERFORMANCE

- 6.1 In addition to the quarterly performance report to HMAB where complaints form part of the performance pack, managers within the landlord service receive monthly, more- detailed reports on complaints performance, including progress on action agreed in the wake of an upheld complaint and where practice or procedures will be reviewed.
- 6.2 As members of the national, sector-wide benchmarking organisation, HouseMark, we submit regular performance information on a very wide range of landlord service performance measures, including complaints handling. Performance summaries are released every month. Two complaints-handling measures are reported:

- Formal complaints received per 1,000 units; and
- Percentage of complaints resolved within timescale

7. CONCLUSION

Our self-assessment concludes that we are now at 97.26% compliance with the new code. Only two criteria are deemed to be non-compliant currently, of which one has already been dealt with and the other will be considered in the near future.

8. Recommendation

HMAB members are requested to note and are invited to comment upon this self-assessment.

Andrew Staton  
Landlord Services Manager

17 April 2024

## I. Appendix A: Self-assessment form

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 I: 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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy updated in 2024 to reflect new code
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	Review of existing stage I complaints will evidence this  <a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Practice allows for this already  Complaints can be submitted by a third party – policy

<b>1.4</b>	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 recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.	Yes	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this
<b>1.5</b>	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	Complaints training and staff updates (team meetings)	Continues to form part of day to day business
<b>1.6</b>	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.	No	Govmetric surveys should be able to accommodate this requirement	Request sent 18/4/24 to feedback provider to develop option. This has now been confirmed and will happen.

## 2. Section 2: Exclusions

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply : Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
<b>2.1</b>	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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this
<b>2.2</b>	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.</li> <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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this

	<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 twelve 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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this
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	Complaints training	Established practice
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Established practice

### 3. 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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/complaints_process">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/complaints_process</a>	See how to complain, telephone, email, writing, staff will support.
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	Complaints training	Established process
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	Yes	End-of-year [March 2024] show that, compared to our peers through benchmarking information, we do not	Demonstrates we are comparable with peers.

	complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.		appear to be under-reporting complaints.	
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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy is clear and available on the web
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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	LGSCO and HO details are clear in the policy
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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this
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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy and established practice, also confirmed during complaints training.

#### 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	Staff structure	Link officer, service level, designated complaint handlers (team leader and above); customer experience team



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	Structure	Team leaders / managers have the authority to resolve stage 1 complaints and the customer experience manager has the authority at stage 2.
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	Training covers this point	Learning points are a regular feature on team meetings and senior management team (landlord services).

## 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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this
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	Internal staff guidance	Established practice
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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this
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	Yes	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this

	the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.			
<b>5.5</b>	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this
<b>5.6</b>	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the 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.	Yes	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this and practice is to issue an acknowledgement and ask the resident to confirm they agree
<b>5.7</b>	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	Internal staff guidance	Established practice
<b>5.8</b>	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	A: Staff guidance and training B: Acknowledgement invites challenge on the landlords understanding of the complaint C: Established practice, if complaint handler has been involved with or continues to be involved with the resident on day to day basis, they would not be involved in the complaint handling. D: All complaint handlers manage complaints fairly and without bias	Established practice
<b>5.9</b>	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 keeping them informed about their complaint.	Yes	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this, internal guidance and training
<b>5.10</b>	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	Yes	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this

	a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.			
<b>5.11</b>	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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this – where an exclusion is to be used, it is established practice to notify the customer of this decision.
<b>5.12</b>	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	Lagan – complaints database	Established practice
<b>5.13</b>	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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this
<b>5.14</b>	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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this – and the vexatious policy can be invoked
<b>5.15</b>	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Vexatious Policy confirms this

## 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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this – practice dictates that early resolution of the complaint is always sought as the first option.
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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <b><u>within ten working days</u></b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this
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. Any extension must be no more than ten working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this
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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this
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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this
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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy and internal complaints handling training

				confirms this to enable this to become established practice
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 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.	Yes	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy and internal complaints handling training confirms this to enable this to become established practice
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	A: Staff guidance and training B, C, D, E, F & G: Staff training and corporate letter templates ensure this is established practice	Internal complaints handling training confirms this to enable this to become established practice

## 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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this
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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this
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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this – residents may be asked to provide clarification of

				reasons where the complaint is of a complex nature
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <b>within 20 working days</b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this
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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this and this is established practice
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this and this is established practice
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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this and this is established practice
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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this and this is established practice
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.	Yes	A: Staff guidance and training B, C, D, E, F & G: Staff training and corporate letter templates ensure this is established practice	Internal complaints-handling training confirms this to enable this to become established practice
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this and this is established practice

## 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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy confirms this and this is established practice
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy and internal guidance confirms this and this is established practice
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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy and internal guidance confirms this and this is established practice
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy and internal guidance confirms this and this is established practice

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

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply : Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
<b>8.1</b>	Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include: a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. 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; c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman; d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; e. any annual report about the landlord’s performance from the Ombudsman; and f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.	Yes	As this is a new requirement, the first annual report is due in April 2025 and will cover all of the required aspects listed at points a to f.	Not due until April 2025
<b>8.2</b>	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	As this is a new requirement, the first annual report is due in April 2025, it is due to be published and shared accordingly.	Not due until 04/2025
<b>8.3</b>	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	Not applicable at present but should a restructure of the landlord service take place in the future then a further self-assessment of this code will take place.	Historical versions of the self-assessment
<b>8.4</b>	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	The landlord has a commitment to undertake actions requested by the ombudsman	Previous cases demonstrate this
<b>8.5</b>	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	The landlord has a commitment to undertake actions requested by the ombudsman	Previous cases demonstrate this



## Section 9: Scrutiny and 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	Previous complaints / SMT reports	Complaint learning is an existing item on the landlords senior management meeting to ensure learning actions are carried forward to completion
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	<a href="https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/page/corporate_complaints_policy">https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/page/corporate_complaints_policy</a>	Policy and internal guidance confirms this and this is established practice
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	Scrutiny minutes (Post April 2025)	Cllr Ashcroft to have elected member oversight and complaint report will go to Scrutiny Committee
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	Director of Customer Experience	Karey Summers will provide the senior oversight
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	Senior leader and elected cabinet member	Director of Customer Experience & Cabinet Lead member for

				Finance, Customer & Support Services, Revenues & Benefits
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	Cabinet lead member for Finance, Customer & Support Services, Revenues & Benefits	Cllr Ian Ashcroft – this is a new requirement, evidence will become available during 2024/25
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> <li>d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.</li> </ul>	Yes	CLT minutes	A draft complaints report has been circulated at senior management level for discussion and refinement, this will be available every quarter
9.8	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to: <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	A protocol and letter template exist for complaints that cut across council departments.  The complaints guidance sets out an expectation that officers will look beyond the circumstances of individual complaints to identify underlying issues, and to use the data and learning from complaints to introduce positive changes and drive service improvements. This includes considering the wider outcomes and what can be done to reduce the likelihood of a similar situation arising in the future for other customers.	

			The council's code of conduct states that employees should deal with all matters with a level of competence appropriate to their role and in accordance with any professional codes of conduct which apply to them.	
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