

## Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form December 2020

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code				
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No	Comment
	<p>Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint?</p> <p><i>An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.</i></p>		<b>No</b>	This definition is included in the new Eastlight Resolutions Policy which will be shared with the Community Gateway Group in January 2021. We expect this to be live by February 2021.
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	<b>Yes</b>		Both existing legacy policies have exclusions and the draft Eastlight policy includes exclusions consistent with the Housing Ombudsman code recommendations
	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon</p>	<b>Yes</b>		All exclusions currently detailed in the existing policies are in line with the Housing Ombudsman's guidelines
2	Accessibility			
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	<b>Yes</b>		Eastlight accept complaints in any format i.e. online, telephone, social media, verbal, email, written

	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	Yes		
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?		No	This is detailed in the legacy Greenfields policy and will form part of the new Eastlight policy
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	Yes		Newsletter, online, verbal contact
<b>3</b>	<b>Complaints team and process</b>			
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	Yes		Our Customer Service Managers oversee the Resolutions process
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	Yes		by negotiation with Senior managers
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	Yes		
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?		No	Customers are involved in the review stage of the legacy Greenfields Policy (two stage process) and a Customer Review forms part of the proposed process in the new Eastlight policy
	Is any third stage optional for residents?	Yes		Legacy Colne customers have access to a three stage process as part of legacy policy – the new Eastlight is a two stage process in line with the Ombudsman recommendations.
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	Yes		Standard closing paragraph for resolution responses includes this information
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	Yes		
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?			Stage one (99%) April - Oct 2020
<b>4</b>	<b>Communication</b>			
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	Yes		This will also be reinforced in the Eastlight Guidelines for their Team members on the Resolutions procedure.

Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	<b>Yes</b>		Our procedure sets out that contact should be made prior to response. This will be reinforced in the Eastlight Guidelines for the Resolution procedure.
Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	<b>Yes</b>		Current legacy policies detail this. New Eastlight policy includes requirement for an acknowledgement to be sent within two working days.
Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	<b>Yes</b>		Standard closing paragraph on resolution responses details this
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?			99%
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?			0%
What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage one Stage one (with extension)</li> <li>• Stage two Stage two (with extension)</li> </ul>			Total 178 complaints Apr to Oct 2020 136 responses within ten days working days 42 new agreed dates 76% 24% 100% N/A
Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	<b>Yes</b>		Example of reasons for extended timescales: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awaiting additional evidence from customer</li> <li>• Awaiting agreed timescales for visiting customer</li> <li>• Delays in necessary visits/inspections due to pandemic restrictions</li> </ul>
Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	<b>Yes</b>		All extensions are agreed with customers as stated in our policy
What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction			Two cases were escalated out of 178 cases in the period April to Oct 2020 which would suggest 99% satisfaction. However, in a random sample of satisfaction surveys 80% of customers said they were satisfied with the outcome of their case. We

				will be looking to increase our satisfaction surveys in this area.
<b>5</b>	<b>Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service</b>			
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	<b>Yes</b>		Two cases were escalated to the Ombudsman Apr – Oct 2020. We requested additional time to collate information for one case due the volume of information required.
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	<b>Yes</b>		We liaised with the Ombudsman service to agree the time extension
<b>6</b>	<b>Fairness in complaint handling</b>			
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	<b>Yes</b>		Our policy is clear that we will liaise with authorised representatives about resolution cases.
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?			
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate?  What was the reason for the refusal?			Escalation was refused in one case which was subsequently referred to the Ombudsman. This involved a dispute regarding responsibility for a repair issue. We are awaiting determination from the Ombudsman about this case.
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	<b>Yes</b>		Explanation and escalation alternatives provided to the customer.
<b>7</b>	<b>Outcomes and remedies</b>			
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	<b>Yes</b>		Resolutions include but are not limited to: apologies, carrying out repairs or additional works/visits, financial reimbursement where appropriate.
<b>8</b>	<b>Continuous learning and improvement</b>			
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?			Examples as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff training on call handling, effective communication, technical processes and customer services.</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly meetings with contractors regarding quality of workmanship (e.g. ground maintenance, cleaning) as well as regular site visits.</li> <li>• Excessive waste in communal areas and fly-tipping following lockdown. Area improvement budget was utilised and education campaign to raise awareness of responsibilities/ requirements led by Housing Managers.</li> <li>• Additional resources recruited following complaints about waiting times</li> <li>• Changes to telephony messaging</li> </ul>
	<p>How do we share these lessons with:</p> <p>a) residents?</p> <p>b) the board/governing body?</p> <p>c) In the Annual Report?</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p> <p><b>Yes</b></p> <p><b>Yes</b></p>		<p>Newsletter /CGG quarterly performance monitoring</p> <p>Annual Complaints report to Board</p>
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	<b>Yes</b>		
	What changes have we made?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have reviewed our complaints policy and procedure ensuring all areas of the new Housing Ombudsman Code are covered.</li> <li>• Following approval of the Eastlight Resolutions policy we will launch a new awareness campaign for our customers and</li> </ul>

				<p>team members on the importance of effective Resolution reporting and handling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will look to learn from resolution cases to drive customer satisfaction and service improvements.</li></ul>
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