



Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code

HCHA self-assessment on compliance against the Code

1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No	Comments
1.1	Does the complaints policy use a definition of a complaint consistent with that of the Housing Ombudsman?	Yes		The definition of a complaint in the current HCHA Complaints Policy (updated August 2020) is consistent with the definition in the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code (the Code).
1.2	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	Yes		
1.3	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?	Yes		Exclusions are explained clearly in the HCHA Complaints Policy, including where matters are subject to legal action. HCHA will, however, endeavour to deal with matters raised, even if they are excluded from the Complaints Policy.
2	Accessibility	Yes	No	Comments
2.1	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	Yes		HCHA accepts complaints however they are made, including in writing, by telephone, in

				<p>person, or initiated via social media.</p> <p>HCHA accepts complaints made by advocates and representatives, providing the complainant has consented to the advocate or representative contacting HCHA on their behalf.</p>
2.2	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	Yes		
2.3	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	Yes		HCHA is determined to comply with the Equalities Act 2010, and will always make reasonable adjustments. HCHA has included a statement in its Complaints Policy and Procedure committing to the provision of any extra help or support needed to complainants in making a complaint.
2.4	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	Yes		HCHA is committed to ensuring good communication via the HCHA website and newsletters.
3	Complaints team and process			
3.1	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?		No	As a small Association, without a Complaints Officer, responsibility for complaints handling at HCHA is shared between the Head of Housing Operations and the Head of Asset Management and Development.*
3.2	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?		n/a	

3.3	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?		n/a	
3.4	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?		n/a	HCHA has not adopted a third stage. The option of an appeal, to be agreed by both parties, has been left open.
3.5	Is any third stage optional for residents?		n/a	
3.6	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	Yes		Information on the complainant's right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman is always included in HCHA's response.
3.7	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	Yes		Information is kept in accordance with data protection requirements.
3.8	At what stage are most complaints resolved?			At stage one.
4	Communication	Yes	No	Comments
4.1	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	Yes		HCHA's Complaints Policy and Procedure explains the timescales for acknowledgement, updates and response.
4.2	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	Yes		HCHA's responses explain how and by when this may be done and whom to contact.

4.3	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	Yes		
4.4	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	Yes		
4.5	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?			The majority of complaints are resolved at stage one.
4.6	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?			In 2020, one complaint reached stage two and was resolved at this stage.
4.7	<p>What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one Stage one (with extension) • Stage two Stage two (with extension) 			<p>100%</p> <p>100%</p>
4.8	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?		n/a	
4.9	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?		n/a	
4.10	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction?			The majority of complaints are resolved to residents' satisfaction.
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service	Yes	No	Comments

5.1	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?		n/a	
5.2	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?		n/a	
6	Fairness in complaint handling	Yes	No	Comments
6.1	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	Yes		Where this occurs, HCHA ensures that this is with the complainant's consent.
6.2	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	Yes		
6.3	How many cases did we refuse to escalate? What was the reason for the refusal?	n/a		
6.4	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	n/a		
7	Outcomes and remedies	Yes	No	Comments
7.1	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	Yes		HCHA makes every effort to learn from complaints and make improvements as a result of investigating complaints.
8	Continuous learning and improvement	Yes	No	Comments
8.1				HCHA will report on complaints received and on learning from

	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?			complaints handling in its Annual Report.
8.2	How do we share these lessons with: a) Residents? b) The board/governing body? c) In the Annual Report?			Learning is shared through HCHA's Annual Report, at Senior Management Team meetings, meetings with staff, and at reviews of the Complaints Policy and Procedure.
8.3	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	Yes		The service standards in the Code provide a useful framework for HCHA to continue with its commitment to excellence in complaints handling.
8.4	What changes have we made?			HCHA has reviewed all parts of its Complaints Policy and Procedure to ensure that the ethos of the Code is embedded within its complaints handling practices. In particular, HCHA has developed more resident friendly complaints handling processes, has publicised the new policy on the HCHA website and in the Summer 2020 edition of the HCHA newsletter, and has produced a new staff guide on the process.

*HCHA is continuing to review its complaints handling processes and will publish further information and data once this review is complete.