

Complaints Self-Assessment – Teachers’ Housing Association (THA) – September 2022.

We have carried out a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman’s revised Complaint Handling Code. The purpose of the Code is to allow landlords to resolve complaints quickly, fairly, and impartially.

Section	Change	Status	Evidence & Actions
N/A	Where the code refers to something landlords ‘must’ do, this is a requirement. Where the code refers to something landlords ‘should’ do, landlords are able to use their discretion to achieve best practice in complaint handling.	Noted	No further action needed.
N/A	Landlords are required to self-assess against the Code annually on ‘comply or explain’ basis and publish this on their website. Non compliance could result in the Ombudsman issuing a complaint handling failure order.	Noted	We will publish a self-assessment on an annual basis. The date for this will be Q3 of 2022/23.
1.2	The use of the Ombudsman’s definition of a complaint is now mandatory. <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>	Compliant	Our current complaints policy updated in October 2020 uses the HOS definition. No further action required.
1.3	Complaints that are submitted via a third party or representative, such as an MP, should still be handled in line with the Landlords complaint policy.	Compliant	Head Office and Scheme based staff are briefed on this. Staff will also be notified and trained.
1.4	Guidance around when chases on a service request are considered a complaint	Compliant	Chasers on a service request will be considered as a complaint. Head Office based staff Scheme based are briefed on this. Staff will be notified and trained.
1.8	Clarity around what constitutes as legal proceedings and where this sits outside of the complaints process.	Compliant	We will observe the HOS guidance on what constitutes ‘legal proceedings’. In most instances, an update on a complaint or a response to a complaint can be provided without prejudicing legal proceedings.
2.1	Clarity about the various channels we expect residents to be able to submit a complaint to their landlord and that landlords must provide more than one access to the complaints system.	Compliant	We have multiple channels that residents can use to complain. We will update our website messaging as well as publish the information in the newsletter.

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	Acknowledgement that not all avenues are necessary and that some channels may not be ones a landlord chooses to use.		
2.5	Requirement to have a published reasonable adjustment policy and the Equality Act.	In progress	THA is committed to ensuring that all tenants can access its services equally and its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy sets out the ways in which we will assist tenants with reasonable adjustments where they face obstacles in accessing the services we provide. We will work towards developing a separate reasonable adjustments policy. It will be based on the Housing Ombudsman’s own policy.
2.7/2.8	Publicising the complaints policy and process, the Complaint Handling Code, and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme in a variety of mediums.	Compliant	We have a page on our website setting out how to make a complaint and a copy of our Complaints and Appeals Policy is available for download from our website. We have periodically included information in our Resident Newsletters about THA’s complaint process and we will continue to do the same.
3.1/3.2	Clarity around responsibility for complaints handling	Compliant	Our policy and procedure set out complaint handling responsibility. To enhance this further, staff will receive refresher on complaints handling in Q3/Q4 22/23.
4.1	Clarity about the handling of a complaint once recorded. Five working days to acknowledge and log a complaint from the date of receipt.	Compliant	No further action required. We acknowledge complaints within 5 working days. Our stage 1 is 10 working days and Stage 2 is 20 working days. This complies with the HOS Code.
4.13	The timescales for a resident to request escalation of a complaint must be included in the complaints policy.	Compliant	Our policy sets this out. No further action required.

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4.14	Reasons for refusing to escalate a complaint	In progress	Our policy will be updated to ensure reasons for refusing to escalate the complaint is clearly communicated to our residents.
4.16	Landlords should seek feedback from residents in relation to the landlord’s complaint handling as a part of the drive to encourage a positive complaint handling and learning culture.	Compliant	We ask for feedback on both the way in which the complaint was handled and the outcome. This insight feedbacks to any improvement actions.
5.1	10 working days for response at stage one starts from the date the complaint is logged.	Compliant	Our policy and procedures set this out.
5.3/5.15/5.19	Provision of the Ombudsman’s details is extensions cannot be agreed.	Compliant	This is applied in practice.
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	Compliant	This happens as a matter of course during complaints handling. Staff will be reminded of this requirement.
5.5	The complaint response must be sent to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known. It must not be delayed until any outstanding actions are completed. Outstanding actions should be tracked and updates provided to the resident.	Compliant	We are compliant with this and we can close complaints whilst leaving an action plan open.
5.7	Clarification regarding when additional complaints can be incorporated into the stage one response.	Compliant	We take a common-sense approach to this at present and staff are briefed on this.
5.11	Complaints must only be escalated to stage two is it has been responded to at stage one and at the residents request.	Compliant	No further action needed.
5.12	The person considering the complaint at Stage Two must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Compliant	This already happens. No further action required.
5.17	If landlords strong believe a third stage is necessary, they must set out their reasons in the self-assessment. More than three stages is not acceptable under any circumstances.	Compliant	No further action needed as we have a two stage complaints policy and process.

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7.3	Expectation that a member of the governing body is appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaints handling culture.	In progress	This was discussed in the Board meeting. A board member is to be identified to have lead responsibility.
7.4	Expectation of what information governing bodies should receive about complaints	Currently under reviewed to see if any additional improvements can be made	Monthly information is shared with the SMT and other staff and information is shared with the Board at Quarterly meetings.
7.6	Expectation that landlords should have a standard objective for all employees in relation to complaint handling	In progress	This will be put in place for relevant staff. This will support the handling of complaints and enhance a complaints management culture.
8.1	Landlords must complete an annual self-assessment against the Code.	Compliant	Updated- self assessment published October 2022 which will be reviewed and published annually.
8.3	Requirements of landlord following self-assessment	Compliant	Following the self-assessment, we carry out any follow up work required in order to remain compliant with the code.

Teachers’ Housing Association

September 2022