

# Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code:

## Self-assessment form

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No
	<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>	The complaints policy has been amended to reflect the Housing Ombudsman Statement	
	<p>Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?</p>	<p>Complaints regarding anti-social behaviour are handled by the Housing Management Team.</p> <p>PHP has an Unreasonable Behaviour Policy to deal with those tenants who make repeated complaints about issues which have already been dealt with.</p>	
	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon</p>	They are in line with Housing Ombudsman recommendations.	

<b>2</b>	<b>Accessibility</b>		
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	Yes, PHP will accept complaints in any forms including recently adding Social Media.	
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	It is available on the PHP website	
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?		PHP does not have a separate policy, but information is included in the Complaints Policy. For example, it sets out that PHP would accept complaints from tenants via 3 <sup>rd</sup> parties in line with E&D and Data Protection. Translators are also available.
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	This is done via the resident magazine, At Home, and also via the PHP website.  The Scrutiny Panel recently reviewed the process and recommendations were implemented. The policy is routinely sent out when acknowledging complaints.	

<b>3</b>	<b>Complaints team and process</b>		
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	PHP has a dedicated Business Support Officer who deals with all complaints.	
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	Wherever possible.	
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	Any disputes would be escalated to the staff member's Head of Service.	
	If there is a third stage to the complaints' procedure are residents involved in the decision making?		<p>PHP recently amended the policy in line with recommendations from a scrutiny review. Residents asked that the process is shortened so that complaints are resolved more quickly.</p> <p>Agreed with Senior Management Team to explore whether a resident panel could review complaints annually to identify any suggestions for improvement or lessons learned.</p>
	Is any third stage optional for residents?		As above.
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	Information on how to escalate to the Housing Ombudsman if the complainant is dissatisfied is included in the standard letter template.	
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	All communication is recorded by the Business Support Officer.	
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?	Most are resolved at Stage 1.	

<b>4 Communication</b>		
Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	Although this has been the case informally, PHP's policy and procedures have been amended to reflect this requirement.	
Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	This is set out in PHP's Stage 1 response	
Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	All complaints are acknowledged within 2 working days	
Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	This information is included at the end of each letter.	
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?	83% (this is calculated including Rapid Response and Stage 1 results)	
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	14% (this includes refusals to move to Stage 2)	
What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage one</li> <li>    Stage one (with extension)</li> <li>• Stage two</li> <li>    Stage two (with extension)</li> </ul>	86% 14% 69% 31%	
Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	Most complaint timescales are only extended if they are complex cases where there is more than one team involved. Obviously in the past year, some have been delayed due to lockdown.	
Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	All residents were contacted to ask for an extension of time and this was confirmed in writing.	
What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction		PHP does not collect this information.

<b>5</b>	<b>Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service</b>		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	Yes they were.	
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	Yes we did.	
<b>6</b>	<b>Fairness in complaint handling</b>		
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	Yes they are, this is included in the Complaints Policy.	
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	Yes, all information is provided in a way which is appropriate to the complainant.	
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate?  What was the reason for the refusal?	4 complaints were refused to escalate to Stage 2.  It was felt that the complainant had not provided any new evidence additional to that which was given at Stage 1.	Although this was in line with policy at that time, the Complaints Policy has been reviewed and updated to ensure it is in line with the recommendations made in the Code of Conduct.
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	All decisions are confirmed in writing.	
<b>7</b>	<b>Outcomes and remedies</b>		
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	The Business Support Officer checks with investigating teams 2 weeks after response to ensure that the production of a complaint improvement plan completed.	

<b>8 Continuous learning and improvement</b>		
<p>What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?</p>	<p>Examples of lessons learned taken from Complaint Improvement Plans:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contractor reviewed booking process to ensure further delays are avoided when setting up appointments for residents.</li> <li>2. Routine inspections for new heating systems are being undertaken to monitor performance and identify any issues early on.</li> <li>3. Contractor to step back and consider individuals needs when dealing with residents, especially around shielding.</li> <li>4. Communication issues between out of hours and contractor discussed and actions agreed to prevent any further issues.</li> <li>5. New process introduced for sharing asbestos information on a monthly basis with contractors.</li> <li>6. New fire alarms and fly screens installed in bin store. Reminder letters sent to all residents on the use of the bin store.</li> <li>7. Formulated appropriate response guidance for use by out of hours during fire alarm and Velux windows activations.</li> <li>8. All future Artex jobs to be completed to an agreed level (agreed between PHP and contractor) and all work being post inspected by either contractor or PHP building surveyor.</li> <li>9. All staff reminded of the need to ask questions to identify whether caller is PHP resident or leaseholder, to ensure that matters are dealt with by the appropriate officers.</li> <li>10. Amendment to complaints procedure for all investigating/reviewing officers to follow up on tasks and maintain regular and appropriate communication with complainants.</li> </ol>	

<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>At Home Magazine, website, social media</p> <p>KPI's and Annual Complaints Report</p>	
<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</p>	<p>Yes, PHP has updated a number of areas in the Complaints Policy and procedures have been reviewed.</p>	
<p>What changes have we made?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of complaint reworded to comply with recommended in Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Communications during complaints have been improved</li> <li>• Will explore whether a resident panel could be used to review complaints</li> <li>• Reasons for refusals has been amended</li> </ul>	