

# 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>	Yes	
Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	Yes	
Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents? Evidence relied upon	<p>Yes – Policy is available on the website <a href="https://www.stonewater.org/about-us/policies/">https://www.stonewater.org/about-us/policies/</a></p> <p>This was reviewed with input from the HOS, Customers and signed off by CX Committee, Board and EDG.</p>	
2 Accessibility		
Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	Yes	
Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	Yes	
Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?		No – E&D Policy refers to Equality Act 2010. Recommendation is that when the E&D policy is reviewed reasonable adjustments included.
Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?		No but we are planning regular campaigns focussing on 'You said, we did' and learning from complaints.
3 Complaints team and process		
Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	Yes - Three	
Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	Yes – The complaints officer complete the investigation stage of our complaints process.	

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?	Yes – Customer Complaints Panel.
Is any third stage optional for residents?	Yes
Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	Yes
Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	Yes – These are logged on CRM and Case Processing with Active H, with hard copies of the letters saved in the case folders on the W. Drive.
At what stage are most complaints resolved?	Stage One – Investigation. During 2019/20 This was 92% of all complaints and for Q1 and Q2 of 2020/21 this has remained at 92%.

#### 4 Communication

Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	Yes										
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 – customer has 15 working days to respond to outcome.										
Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	Yes										
Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	Yes										
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?	92%										
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	80%										
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>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>2019/20</td> <td>2020/21 (Q1 and Q2)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stage 1 overall – 88.5%</td> <td>Stage 1 overall – 87.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stage 1 with extension – 98.8%</td> <td>Stage 1 with extension – 93.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stage 2 – 58%</td> <td>Stage 2 – 93.75%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stage 2 – with extension – N/A</td> <td>Stage 2 with extension – N/A</td> </tr> </table>	2019/20	2020/21 (Q1 and Q2)	Stage 1 overall – 88.5%	Stage 1 overall – 87.9%	Stage 1 with extension – 98.8%	Stage 1 with extension – 93.9%	Stage 2 – 58%	Stage 2 – 93.75%	Stage 2 – with extension – N/A	Stage 2 with extension – N/A
2019/20	2020/21 (Q1 and Q2)										
Stage 1 overall – 88.5%	Stage 1 overall – 87.9%										
Stage 1 with extension – 98.8%	Stage 1 with extension – 93.9%										
Stage 2 – 58%	Stage 2 – 93.75%										
Stage 2 – with extension – N/A	Stage 2 with extension – N/A										
Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	Yes, The Complaints officer is required to record from a selection of reasons on Active H. This is always agreed with the customer prior to extending.										
Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	Yes, all extensions are confirmed in writing with the customer.										
What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>2019/20 – 45%</td> <td>2020/21 – To Date</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Against a target of 60%</td> <td>52.8% against a target of 60%.</td> </tr> </table>	2019/20 – 45%	2020/21 – To Date	Against a target of 60%	52.8% against a target of 60%.						
2019/20 – 45%	2020/21 – To Date										
Against a target of 60%	52.8% against a target of 60%.										

## 5 Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service

Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	No. When extensions are required they are always agreed with the Housing Ombudsman beforehand.
Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	Yes, All extensions are agreed with the Housing Ombudsman beforehand. And then the information/evidence is provided by the new agreed deadline date.

## 6 Fairness in complaint handling

Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	Yes. As detailed in the complaint policy.
If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	Yes. We have also reviewed and updated the complaint handling leaflet, which is available on the website.
How many cases did we refuse to escalate? What was the reason for the refusal?	During 2020/21 –We have refused four cases. The reasons being that the complaint reasons were outside of the criteria stated in the complaints policy. For example, relating to incidents that have been previously investigated and resolved or about non consultation when recruiting a new director which the consumer standards state we are not required to do.
Did we explain our decision to the resident?	Yes, the reason was explained to the resident for each complaint that was refused.

## 7 Outcomes and remedies

Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	Yes. All remedies are checked against the Housing Ombudsman three principles and their remedy guidance is followed. Alternative non-financial remedies are also considered where appropriate.
---	---

## 8 Continuous learning and improvement

What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?	<p>In the last 12 months the improvements made included:</p> <p>Implementing the Scrutiny Panel review findings to ensure our procedure is customer friendly.</p> <p>Implementing the findings from the lean review to identify areas of waste within the process and create an efficient and effective process internally.</p> <p>Regular reporting to the Operational Directors Group to flag risks and systemic issues through analysis specific complaint cases.</p> <p>Housing Ombudsman training workshops were delivered to colleagues throughout the organisation to improve complaints handling and we handle dissatisfied customers</p> <p>We were one of 6 RPs taking part in the Housing Ombudsman Pilot – Delivering faster and effective redress. Working with the ombudsman to ensure our process and policies are ready for the implementation of the complaint handling code.</p>
---	--

<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>A) We currently share lessons learned through the Annual Customer Review; but this will be strengthened through our quarterly newsletters, social media campaigns and regular updates on the website in the next 12 months.</p> <p>B) Regular reports to both the EDG and more latterly the ODG analysing specific cases and highlighting any systemic issues and complaints performance is reported to CX Committee on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>C) Complaints is a section included in our Customer Annual Review.</p>
<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</p>	<p>Yes. A lot of changes were already in progress; but the code provides a consistent guideline to check against for complaints handling.</p>
<p>What changes have we made?</p>	<p>In preparation for the complaints handling code we have updated and improved both our complaints policy and our complaint handling leaflet for customers. We have also created a new internal process to ensure efficiency and visibility of information (this is due to go live 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020), The Housing Ombudsman has delivered training to a number of colleagues to improve complaint handling and how we deal with service failure.</p> <p>Future improvements to be made include; strengthening the EDI policy to include reasonable adjustments, reviewing the compensation policy (Q1 2020/21) and we have recently undergone an internal audit which focussed on providing assurance looking back on how complaint cases have been handled over the last 18 months, but also looking forward at our readiness to adhere to the complaint handling code. We will ensure any findings from this audit are implemented in the next few months.</p>