



Annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code
April 2024 - March 2025



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The Housing Ombudsman Service look at complaints about housing organisations registered with them and resolve disputes involving the tenants and leaseholders of social landlords.

Its service is free, independent, and impartial. Tenants and landlords can contact the Ombudsman at any time for

support in helping to resolve a dispute. Its website, housing-ombudsman.org.uk, provides information and guidance to support Tenants and landlords and it can also be contacted by telephone on 0300 111 3000 or by mail at Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Preston, PR2 0ET.

The Housing Ombudsman published a revised Complaints Handling Code in 2024,

and a key requirement is for landlords to publish a self-assessment against the Code's key complaint handling principles annually.

The assessment has been led by the Executive Director of People in collaboration with the board member responsible for complaints (MRC) and customer groups OASIS and CARE.

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	<p>A complaint must be defined as:</p> <p><i>‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.’</i></p>	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>We have adopted the definition of a complaint as set out in the Complaint Handling Code. This is set out in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy.</p> <p>Complaint Definition – As set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website ‘Policies’ page, section 3, paragraph 2.</p>
1.3	<p>A resident does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord’s complaints policy.</p>	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>Our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy outlines that the word ‘complaint’ does not have to be used for a complaint to be identified and treated as such, and that we must give customers the choice to make a complaint whenever they express dissatisfaction.</p> <p>The policy also explains that we will accept complaints made by a third party or representative</p>

				<p>and handle them in line with the policy.</p> <p>The word 'Complaint' – As set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page, Section 2 paragraph 5</p>
1.4	<p>Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy • Training Logs 	<p>Our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy outlines the definition of a service request and details how these are managed. The difference between a service request and a complaint is also reinforced in our mandatory training for complaint handlers.</p> <p>Our Customer Resolutions team regularly reviews and monitors complaints to ensure compliance with policy. Service requests are raised and tasked to the appropriate service area where they are monitored and managed in line with the relevant policy.</p> <p>Service Request Definition, as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy</p>

				which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 2
1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>Our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy outlines that a complaint will be raised if a customer expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. It also explains that we will continue efforts to address the service request if a customer complains.</p> <p>The Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page</p>
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>If an expression of dissatisfaction is made through one of our telephone surveys, the customer is given the option to make a complaint by the colleague conducting the survey.</p> <p>In addition to this, all our digital surveys include a link to the complaints page of our website should customers be</p>

				<p>dissatisfied and want further information on how to raise a complaint.</p> <p>The Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page</p>
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Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint, they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>Circumstances under which we may decide not to accept a complaint are minimal - as set out in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy.</p> <p>All cases are treated individually. We will exercise our discretion appropriately and make sure that any decision to exclude a complaint is fair and valid and that the reasons for the decision are clearly explained to the customer.</p>

				<p>In such cases the customer will be provided contact details for the Ombudsman so that any decision taken to exclude a complaint can be challenged.</p> <p>We didn't have any complaints that were refused during this period.</p>
2.2	<p>A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. • Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court. • Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy. 	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>The circumstances under which we may decide not to accept or escalate a complaint are set out in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy. These circumstances reflect the examples included in the Complaint Handling Code with the addition of ASB reports.</p> <p>Definition of what will not be accepted as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3, subheading complaint handling, paragraph 8.</p>
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	As indicated in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy, complaints referred to us within 12 months of the issue

	excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.			<p>occurring or the customer becoming aware of the issue, are accepted.</p> <p>All cases are treated individually, and we will exercise our discretion appropriately for cases received outside of this timeframe.</p>
2.4	<p>If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.</p>	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>As outlined in section 2.1 of this assessment, our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy outlines the circumstances under which we may decide not to accept a complaint.</p> <p>It also explains that in such cases, a detailed explanation will be provided to the customer setting out the reasons for our decision and explaining their right to contact the Ombudsman so that our decision can be independently reviewed.</p> <p>Definition of what will not be accepted as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website</p>

				'Policies' page section 3, subheading complaint handling, paragraph 8.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy • Training Logs 	<p>All cases are treated individually. We will exercise our discretion appropriately once all the circumstances have been considered, and make sure that any decision to exclude a complaint is fair and valid.</p> <p>This approach is reinforced in our mandatory complaint handling training.</p> <p>We didn't have any complaints that were refused during this period.</p>

Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>Complaints can be submitted through our contact centre, email, social media, or in writing. Additionally, customers can raise complaints in person via any colleague or with their Locality Coordinator.</p> <p>Our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy outlines our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and has been endorsed by our engaged customer group OASIS.</p> <p>In addition to this all-colleagues complete mandatory EDI training and all front facing colleagues took part in additional EDI training during August 2024, as a result of learning from complaints. We also have several EDI champions and an EDI forum who are accessible to</p>

				<p>colleagues if they need guidance on how to support customers with reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>The Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page.</p>
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy • Induction checklist • Training Logs • Annual training for complaint handlers 	<p>All colleagues are required to understand our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy together with the supporting procedure. This requirement is included in our colleague induction checklist.</p> <p>In addition to this, regular communications are provided throughout the company in meetings, internal newsletters, resource pages and management meetings.</p> <p>Colleagues identified as 'complaint handlers' are required to complete mandatory complaint handling training and refresher sessions.</p> <p>The Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the</p>

				Aspire Housing website 'Policies page.
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy • Annual Report • Corporate Plan 2030 • End of year TSM performance submission 	<p>Our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy reflects our positive outlook on complaints. We value complaints as a way of involving customers in shaping and improving our services and view them as an opportunity to learn and put things right.</p> <p>Aspire records a higher volume of complaints when compared to some other social housing providers. This is reflective of our improved accessibility to the complaints procedure and raised awareness of complaints in general, in line with the aspirations of the Complaint Handling Code.</p> <p>Complaint volumes are set out in the Annual Complaints Performance Report which accompanies this self-assessment.</p> <p>The Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies page.</p>

				<p>The Aspire Housing Corporate Plan 2030 is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website, corporate plan page.</p> <p>The Aspire Housing Annual Complaints and Performance Report is available for customers on the Aspire Housing website, complaints and feedback page</p>
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two-stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>Our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy clearly sets out our two-stage process, including the timeframes for responding.</p> <p>The policy is available electronically on the 'Policies' page of the Aspire website, along with additional guidance on the 'Complaints' page.</p> <p>The policy is also available to customers via email, in printed form and by post at the customers' request.</p> <p>We can also make it available in other formats, such as braille,</p>

				<p>large format and audio, when required.</p> <p>Customers can view the Aspire Housing website Complaints page for more information</p>
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	Our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy outlines how we will publicise details of the policy, including information about the Ombudsman and the Complaint Handling Code.
3.6	Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>Our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy outlines how advocacy and support can be utilised. We will accept complaints from advocates where authorisation has been given by the customer for us to discuss the matter with them on their behalf.</p> <p>Our colleagues can also support customers to complain if there is no conflict of interest with their own role.</p> <p>Advocacy & Support as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies</p>

				page, section 3, subheading Advocacy and Support, page 6
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>The right of access to the Ombudsman service and their contact details are noted in all formal response letters to customers complaints.</p> <p>These details are also noted on the 'Complaints' page of our website and included in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy, section 3, subheading Housing Ombudsman, page 8</p>

Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that	Yes	Customer Relations team	<p>The role of 'Complaints Officer' is assumed by the Customer Relations team.</p> <p>This small, central team of colleagues specialise in</p>

	<p>person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.</p>			<p>complaints and support the wider network of complaint handlers with complex complaints and compliance with our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and Complaint Handling Code.</p> <p>The Customer Relations team are responsible for all communications with the Ombudsman and reporting complaints performance to the Senior Management Team, Member Responsible for Complaints and Aspire Housing Board.</p>
4.2	<p>The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.</p>	Yes		<p>The Customer Relations team have access to staff at all levels and may call management meetings to support with the review off complex cases. The team also have the autonomy to act on and resolve disputes promptly and fairly.</p> <p>In addition to this, each service area has a designated complaints handler, who will also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve issues quickly.</p>

4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory Training Programme • Complaints Charter • Corporate Plan 2030 • Complaints Annual Report 	<p>Complaint handlers are periodically reminded of their responsibilities with an ongoing programme of mandatory training in place.</p> <p>In addition to this, all complaint handlers have pledged commitment to the Aspire Complaints Charter. The Charter commits all colleagues to providing the highest level of service and satisfaction to our valued customers by putting our customers at the centre of everything we do.</p>

Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>Our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy is the only policy in place for managing complaints.</p> <p>The policy aligns with the expectations of the latest version of the Complaint Handling Code, and</p>

				<p>encourages a positive complaint handling culture, viewing each complaint as an opportunity to listen, learn and put things right.</p> <p>The Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page.</p>
5.2	<p>The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.</p>	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>We have a two-stage complaint procedure accessible to customers, prior to escalation to the Housing Ombudsman Service.</p> <p>We do not operate any additional (informal) stages, and none are set out in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy.</p> <p>Complaints are acknowledged at the point of receipt and a reference number provided.</p>
5.3	<p>A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.</p>	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>We have a two-stage complaint procedure in place that is compliant with the Complaint Handling Code.</p> <p>The Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is</p>

				available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page.
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	As outlined in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy, no complaints are dealt with by third parties.
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	As outlined in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy, no complaints are dealt with by third parties.
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as "the complaint definition". If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	Complaint handlers are required to contact customers to understand their complaint, and the outcomes sought; this is then recorded on our complaint management system. Following investigation of the complaint and communication with the customer, we outline our understanding of the complaint in our response letter and ensure that all points are responded to.

5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>This is reinforced through our mandatory complaint handler training programme.</p> <p>As detailed in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy, if we decide not to accept a complaint or element of a complaint, a detailed explanation will be provided to the customer setting out the reasons for our decision and explaining their right to contact the Ombudsman so that our decision can be independently reviewed.</p> <p>Definition of Complaints will not be considered for as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3, subheading complaint handling, paragraph 8.</p>
5.8	<p>At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy Training Logs 	This process is outlined in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and is reinforced through our mandatory complaint handler training.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give the resident a fair chance to set out their position • take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest • consider all relevant information and evidence carefully 			<p>Complaint handlers are trained to manage complaints with empathy and to reach fair outcomes for our customers at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Any investigation takes account of both points of view, and complaint handlers are trained to provide an adequate opportunity for customers to present their side of any case before a decision is reached.</p> <p>As part of this approach complaint handlers contact customers by telephone to encourage dialogue, build rapport and understand their circumstances and desired outcomes.</p>
5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy • Training logs 	Keeping customers updated on the progress of their complaint is a key aim outlined in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy, and this is reinforced through our mandatory complaint handler training.

				<p>If we fall outside of the timescales directed by the Complaint Handling Code, we will communicate this with our customer and agree a communication plan for keeping them informed about their complaint.</p> <p>Definition of Complaint Handling as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3, subheading complaint handling, page 5.</p>
5.10	<p>Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy • EDI Policy 	<p>We understand our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and in relation to the requirements to make reasonable adjustments to support customers.</p> <p>We treat everyone fairly and help those who need it. We make arrangements so that everyone has an equal chance to tell us what they think in a way that is easy for them. This is reinforced through our</p>

				<p>mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>In addition to this all-colleagues complete mandatory EDI training and all front facing colleagues took part in additional EDI training during August 2024, as a result of learning from complaints. We also have several EDI champions and an EDI forum who are accessible to colleagues if they need guidance on how to support customers with reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>Any adjustments agreed will be documented on our Housing Management System.</p> <p>Definition of Equality Impact Assessment as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3, subheading Equality Impact Assessment, page 11.</p>
5.11		Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	This is outlined in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy,

	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.			<p>and each case is considered on individual merit. A common-sense approach and the particular circumstances are considered when requests are received outside of the policy guidelines. No escalation requests were refused last year.</p> <p>The Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page</p>
5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy • Housing Management System (MRI) • Included within the Performance Management Framework – SMT performance pack (monthly) – Hos weekly • QA Audit Records • KIM Self-Assessment 	<p>All information relating to each individual complaint is held in one place on our Housing Management System.</p> <p>We recognise the importance of good accurate record keeping and this is reinforced through our mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>Good record keeping will continue to be a key focus for the organisation and will include a regular review of our self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Knowledge and Information Management (KIM) Report.</p>

				In addition to this, our Customer Relations team conduct regular quality assurance checks and provide feedback to complaint handlers and managers where required.
5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	Each service area has designated complaints handler(s), who are trained and have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve issues quickly. This is further reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training.
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	There may be some instances where customer behaviour is deemed to be unreasonable. These instances and our approach to managing these are set out within our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy. Definition of Unreasonable behaviour as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3, subheading unreasonable behaviour, page 10.

5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy • EDI Policy 	<p>Restrictions placed on contact due to unreasonable behaviour are proportionate and applied in exceptional circumstances only.</p> <p>Aspire reserve the right to cease communication with the customer in these instances and refer them to an advocate/designated person to act on their behalf in line with the 'Equality Act 2010' and our 'EDI Policy'.</p> <p>Definition of Unreasonable behaviour as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3, subheading unreasonable behaviour, page 10.</p>
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Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>We will always look to provide a satisfactory resolution to a customer's complaint as quickly as possible within the timeframes set out in the Code.</p> <p>Complaints are reviewed regularly and complex cases dealt with via complex case reviews to ensure a suitable resolution is reached. Complaints are also discussed within regular senior management meetings to ensure cases are resolved promptly and an appropriate resolution provided.</p> <p>When reviewing cases, we take into consideration any</p>

				customer vulnerabilities as well as the circumstances of the complaint.
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy • Weekly Audit/HOUSE 	<p>This requirement is reflected in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and reinforced through our framework, and mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>All complaint investigations will involve personal contact with the person making the complaint within 5 days, either by telephone, or a home visit, to understand the reasons for the complaint and what can be done to resolve it.</p> <p>Definition of Stages as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3,</p>

				subheading Stage 1: Complaint, page 7
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy • Annual Report • PMF – Performance pack to HB and SMT 	<p>This requirement is reflected in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and reinforced through our framework, and mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>Performance is also monitored via our monthly Senior Management Team meeting.</p> <p>Definition of Stages as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3, subheading Stage 1: Complaint, page 7</p>

6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>This requirement is reflected in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and reinforced through our framework, and mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>Definition of extension as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3, subheading Stage 1: Complaint, paragraph 3, page 7</p>
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>This requirement is reflected in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and reinforced through our framework, and mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>Definition of extension as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3, subheading Stage 1: Complaint, paragraph 3, page 7</p>

6.6	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>This requirement is reflected in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and reinforced through our framework, and mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>Definition of extension as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3, subheading Stage 1: Complaint, paragraph 4, page 7</p>
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy • Response Templates 	<p>This requirement is reflected in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and reinforced through our framework, and mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>Our standard response template letter is designed to support compliance with this requirement, prompting the complaint handler to list and respond to all complaint points.</p> <p>Our complaint handlers recognise the requirement to reference the relevant policy,</p>

				<p>law and good practice when handling a complaint.</p> <p>Quality audits are carried out monthly by the Customer Relations team, and complaint handling responses are reviewed and scrutinised by our customer advocacy group (C.A.R.E).</p> <p>The Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page</p> <p>Aspire Housing website has a dedicated page about their customer engagement groups, including the CARE Group.</p>
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>This requirement is reflected in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and reinforced through our framework, and mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>The Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page</p>

	delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.			
6.9	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complaint stage; • the complaint definition; • the decision on the complaint; • the reasons for any decisions made; • the details of any remedy offered to put things right; • details of any outstanding actions; and • details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response. 	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>Our standard response templates follow the Complaint Handling Code and include all the points listed. These templates have been reviewed and approved by our engaged customer group C.A.R.E.</p> <p>Responses are checked via monthly quality audits and reviewed quarterly by the C.A.R.E group.</p> <p>This is also reinforced through our complaint handler training programme.</p> <p>Aspire Housing website has a dedicated page about their customer engagement groups, including the CARE Group.</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>This requirement is reflected in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and reinforced through our framework, and mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>Definition of stage 1 as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3, subheading Stage 1: Complaint, page 7</p>
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaint's procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>This requirement is reflected in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and reinforced through our framework, and mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>Definition of stage 2: appeals as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page 8</p>

6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>This requirement is reflected in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and reinforced through our framework, and mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>As part of our Stage 2 process, Stage 2 handlers are expected to contact the customer within five working days to acknowledge the complaint and understand why the customer remains unhappy.</p> <p>Definition of appeals as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3, subheading Stage 2 appeals: page 8</p>
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy.	<p>This requirement is reflected in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and reinforced through our framework, and mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>Our complaint handling process has dedicated Stage 1</p>

				and Stage 2 handlers to ensure impartiality between stages.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>This requirement is reflected in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and reinforced through our framework, and mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>Definition of appeals as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3, subheading Stage 2 appeals: page 8</p>
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>This requirement is reflected in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and reinforced through our framework, and mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>The Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page</p>

6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>This requirement is reflected in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and reinforced through our framework, and mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>The Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page</p>
6.17	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>We are compliant with this requirement as outlined in our response to section 6.6.</p> <p>Definition of stage 1 as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3, subheading Stage 1: Complaint, paragraph 4, page 7</p>
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>This requirement is reflected in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and reinforced through our framework, and mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>Our complaint handlers recognise the requirement to</p>

				<p>reference the relevant policy, law and good practice when handling a complaint.</p> <p>As outlined in section 6.7, our standard response templates are designed to support compliance with this requirement, ensuring that all complaint points are listed and responded to.</p> <p>Quality audits are carried out monthly by the Customer Relations team, and complaint handling responses are reviewed and scrutinised by our customer advocacy group (C.A.R.E).</p> <p>The Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page</p>
6.19	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complaint stage; • the complaint definition; • the decision on the complaint; 	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>Our standard response templates follow the Complaint Handling Code and include all points listed. These templates have been reviewed and approved by our engaged customer group C.A.R.E.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the reasons for any decisions made; the details of any remedy offered to put things right; details of any outstanding actions; and details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied. 			<p>In addition to this, responses are checked through monthly quality audits and reviewed quarterly by our C.A.R.E group.</p> <p>This is also reinforced through our complaint handler training programme.</p> <p>Aspire Housing website has a dedicated page about their customer engagement groups, including the CARE Group.</p>
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>This requirement is reflected in our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and reinforced through our framework, and mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>The Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page</p>

Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	<p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologising; • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; • Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons; • Acting if there has been a delay; • Reconsidering or changing a decision; • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • Providing a financial remedy; • Changing policies, procedures or practices. 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy • Training Logs 	<p>At all stages the aim is to resolve the complaint to the customers satisfaction. Where something has gone wrong, we will acknowledge this, apologise, and set out the actions we have taken or will take, to put it right and when these will happen. These include the actions listed in the Complaint Handling Code.</p> <p>This is also reinforced through our mandatory complaint handler training.</p> <p>Definition of complaint resolution as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3,</p>

				subheading complaint resolution, page 9
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy • Training Logs 	<p>Any remedy offered takes into consideration the individual case and circumstances and is in-line with the Complaint Handling Code. This requirement is re-enforced through our mandatory training programme.</p> <p>The Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page</p>
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>We provide customers with a clear explanation of the outcome of our investigation including the reasons for our decision, an apology where appropriate, and what action we will take.</p> <p>Any remedies offered will be tracked and followed through to completion as agreed by the complaint handler.</p> <p>Definition of complaint handling as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is</p>

				available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3, subheading complaint handling, page 5
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>Our Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy is aligned with the Complaint Handling Code and all remedies reflect this. Our financial remedies are based on the Housing Ombudsman compensation guidelines.</p> <p>Definition of financial remedies as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 3, subheading complaint resolution, page 9</p>

Section 8: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual complaints Performance report April 23 – March 24 	Our Self-Assessment and Annual Complaints Performance Report follows the Housing Ombudsman

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept; any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman; the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landlord Performance Report published by HOS 23/24 	<p>guidelines and is published on our website.</p> <p>The Aspire Housing Annual Complaints and Performance Report is available for customers on the Aspire Housing website, complaints and feedback page</p>
8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes	Aspire Housing Board Endorsement June 2025	Our Self-Assessment and Annual Complaints Performance Report are reviewed and scrutinised by the Aspire Housing Board. The reports, alongside the Boards comments, are published on our website.

				The Aspire Housing Board Member comments are available for customers on the Aspire Housing website, complaints and feedback page
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	N/A	A new self-assessment would be completed in the event of a significant restructure or change in procedures.
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	N/A	We will comply with any request to review and update the self-assessment as directed by the Housing Ombudsman.
8.5	If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.	Yes	Business Continuity Plan	<p>We will comply with this requirement should such a situation arise.</p> <p>Our Senior Management team are aware of its obligations to comply with the Complaint Handling Code and our Head of Customer Voice will take responsibility for providing any such updates to customers and the Ombudsman Service should this situation arise.</p>

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	Annual complaints Performance Report April 24 – March 25	<p>Feedback from complaints, compliments and survey results is reviewed and analysed. Insights are captured and used to drive service improvements.</p> <p>Learning from complaints is also identified and considered by the Senior Management team at the quarterly Complaints Panel. All learning from complaints is included in our Annual Complaints Performance Report.</p> <p>Themes and trends will be assessed by Senior Management to identify any potential systemic issues, serious risks or policies and procedures that may need reviewing. The themes and trends will also be used to inform training requirements for colleagues and contractors.</p>

				<p>The Aspire Housing Annual Complaints and Performance Report is available for customers on the Aspire Housing website, complaints and feedback page</p> <p>Definition of learning from complaints as set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page section 5 Responsibility of Aspire, subheading learning from complaints and reporting, page 11</p>
9.2	<p>A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy • Corporate Plan 2030 • Complaints Charter • Customer Promises 	<p>Aspire Housing encourages a positive complaint handling culture and views each one as an opportunity to listen, learn and put things right; we want our customers to feel heard and listened to.</p> <p>Our 'Corporate Plan 2030' is based on the values of 'Championing the Customer' and putting 'People First'. As part of this all complaint handlers within the business</p>

				<p>sign our 'Complaints Charter' which outlines our commitment to our customers in addressing and resolving customer complaints promptly and effectively and outlines our expectations of all our colleagues who handle our customers complaints.</p> <p>The Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website 'Policies' page</p> <p>The Aspire Housing Corporate Plan 2030 is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website, corporate plan page.</p> <p>Aspire Housing Complaints Charter is available on the to customers on the Aspire Housing website.</p>
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Reports to OASIS and CARE 	We scrutinise our complaint handling procedures, policies and performance through our

	<p>wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Complaints Performance Report 	<p>engaged customer groups 'OASIS' and C.A.R.E'.</p> <p>In addition to this, our nominated Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) ensures that our governing body receives regular updates on our complaint handling performance.</p> <p>Learning from complaints is also identified and considered by our Senior Management team at the quarterly Complaints Panel. All learning from complaints is included in our Annual Complaints Performance Report published on our website.</p> <p>Customers can view the Aspire Housing website Complaints page, and customer can find out more about Aspire Housing's customer engagement group on the Aspire Housing website, including information about OASIS.</p>
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9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Voice team • Customer Relations team 	<p>Our Head of Customer Voice is accountable for our complaint handling. The Customer Relations Team supports the process and reports directly to the Head of Customer Voice.</p> <p>This team reports directly to the Director of Corporate Services under the Executive Director of People and ensures that there is a robust complaint handling framework in place. This also includes liaison with the Ombudsman Service, MRC and Aspire Housing Board.</p>
9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').	Yes	Aspire Housing Board Members - MRC	Jane Atherton who is a member of the Aspire Housing Board has been appointed to as the Member Responsible for Complaints.
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Yes	MRC role	The Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) is responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on Aspires complaint handling performance. The MRC has access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings, which is

				available on the Housing Ombudsman website
9.7	<p>As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and annual complaints performance and service improvement report. 	Yes	MRC role and responsibilities	<p>The MRC and Aspire's Board receive quarterly updates on complaints performance that align with the requirements set out in the Complaint Handling Code.</p> <p>In addition to this, the MRC and Board receive the annual self-assessment and complaints report.</p> <p>Guidance is available from the Housing Ombudsman website</p>
9.8	<p>Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy Corporate Plan 2030 Complaint Handling Charter 	<p>Our 'Corporate Plan 2030' is based on the values of 'Championing the Customer' and putting 'People First'.</p> <p>In line with our values, all complaint handlers within the business sign our 'Complaints Charter' which outlines our commitment to our customers in addressing and resolving customer complaints promptly and effectively and outlines our</p>

	<p>complaints, rather than blaming others; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body. 			<p>expectations of all our colleagues who handle our customers complaints.</p> <p>The Aspire Housing Corporate Plan 2030 is available to customers on the Aspire Housing website, corporate plan page.</p>
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Talk to us



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