



# Annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code April 2023 - March 2024



## Annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code

April 2023-March 2024

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](http://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 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ.

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	A complaint must be defined as:  <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>	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	As set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire website 'Policies' page.
1.3	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.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	All expressions of dissatisfaction with our service in line with the definition are logged as a complaint, whether it concerns Aspire or a third party acting on our behalf.
1.4	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.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	As set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire website 'Policies' page.
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	All expressions of dissatisfaction with our service in line with the definition are logged as a complaint, whether it concerns Aspire or a third party acting on our behalf.
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	As set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire website 'Policies' page.

## 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 Exclusions.  Annual complaint handling training.  Induction training.	As set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire website 'Policies' page.
2.2	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.</li> </ul>	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	As set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire website 'Policies' page.
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 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.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	As set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire website 'Policies' page.
2.4	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.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	As set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire website 'Policies' page.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary/explanation
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	As set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire website 'Policies' page.

## 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	As set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire website 'Policies' page.
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	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy Induction Training Annual training for complaint handlers	As set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire 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	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy Annual Report Corporate Plan 2030	We view complaints as an opportunity to put things right and inform continuous improvement of our services.
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	The Policy is available on the 'Policies' page of the Aspire website along with additional guidance on the 'Complaints' page under 'What happens after I complain?'.
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	The Policy is available on the 'Policies' page of the Aspire website along with additional guidance on the 'Complaints' page under 'What happens after I complain?'.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary/explanation
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	The Policy is available on the 'Policies' page of the Aspire website along with additional guidance on the 'Complaints' page under 'What happens after I complain?'.
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	The Policy is available on the 'Policies' page of the Aspire website along with additional guidance on the 'Complaints' page under 'What happens after I complain?'. Right of access to the Ombudsman Service is also noted in all letters and on the web site.

## 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 person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes	Customer Relations Manager	<p>The role of 'complaints officer' is assumed by the Customer Relations Manager.</p> <p>This manager reports into the Executive Director for People and ensures that there is a robust complaint handling framework in place.</p> <p>This role is a key point of contact for the senior management team (SMT).</p>
4.2	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.	Yes	Customer Relations Manager job description (JD)	<p>The role of 'complaints officer' is assumed by the Customer Relations Manager.</p> <p>This manager reports into the Executive Director for People and ensures that there is a robust complaint handling framework in place.</p> <p>This role is a key point of contact for the senior management team (SMT).</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	<p>Mandatory Training Programme</p> <p>Complaints Charter</p> <p>Induction programme</p>	<p>An ongoing programme of mandatory training is in place for all complaint handlers.</p> <p>We expect all complaint handlers to pledge commitment to the Complaints Charter.</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	As set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire website 'Policies' page.
5.2	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.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>Handlers are required to record all interactions with the customer on our system.</p> <p>In line with our Customer Feedback Policy, we have a two-stage process, prior to escalation to the Housing Ombudsman Service.</p> <p>Complaints are acknowledged at the point of receipt and a reference number provided.</p>
5.3	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.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	We have a two-stage complaint process in place that aligns with the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) code.
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	We have a two-stage complaint process in place that aligns with the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) code.
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	We have a two-stage complaint process in place that aligns with the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) code.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary/explanation
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	<p>Handlers are required to contact the customer to understand the complaint and outcomes sought and record this on the system.</p> <p>How this is set out in our response letter forms part of our complaint handling training.</p>
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	This is reinforced through our mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
5.8	<p>At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind</li> <li>• give the resident a fair chance to set out their position</li> <li>• take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest</li> <li>• consider all relevant information and evidence carefully</li> </ul>	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	This is reinforced through our mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
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	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	This is reinforced through our mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
5.10	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.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	This is reinforced through our mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
5.11	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.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	This is reinforced through our mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary/explanation
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	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy Housing Management System (MRI)	As set out within the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy which is available to customers on the Aspire website 'Policies' page, and is reinforced through our mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
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	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
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	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
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	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	This is noted and addressed through our policy.

## 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	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <b>within five working days of the complaint being received.</b>	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <b>within 10 working days</b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3). It is also a key Tenant Satisfaction Measure.
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	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
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	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary/explanation
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  Housing management system (MRI)	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
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	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	The standard resolution template letter requires that all points listed are responded to.  This is also reinforced through our complaint handler training, as previously referenced.
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 delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the complaint stage;</li> <li>• the complaint definition;</li> <li>• the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>• the reasons for any decisions made;</li> <li>• the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</li> <li>• details of any outstanding actions; and</li> <li>• details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.</li> </ul>	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	The standard resolution template letter requires that all points listed are responded to.  This is also reinforced through our complaint handler training, as previously referenced.

## Stage 2:

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	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
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	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
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	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
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.	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <b>within 20 working days</b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
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	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary/explanation
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	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
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	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
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	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
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"> <li>• the complaint stage;</li> <li>• the complaint definition;</li> <li>• the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>• the reasons for any decisions made;</li> <li>• the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</li> <li>• details of any outstanding actions; and</li> <li>• details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.</li> </ul>	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	<p>The standard resolution template letter requires that all points listed are responded to.</p> <p>This is also reinforced through our complaint handler training, as previously referenced.</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	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).

## 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"> <li>• Apologising;</li> <li>• Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;</li> <li>• Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;</li> <li>• Acting if there has been a delay;</li> <li>• Reconsidering or changing a decision;</li> <li>• Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;</li> <li>• Providing a financial remedy;</li> <li>• Changing policies, procedures or practices.</li> </ul>	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	This is reinforced through our framework and mandatory complaint handler training, as referenced above (4.3).
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	This is reinforced through our complaint handler training, as referenced previously & referenced in the complaint resolution letter.
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy	This is reinforced through our complaint handler training, and policy.



## Section 8: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary/explanation
8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;</li> <li>• the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;</li> <li>• any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and</li> <li>• any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.</li> </ul>	Yes	Annual complaints Performance report April 23 – March 24	Annual report is published on the Aspire Housing website.
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 2024	Annual report is published on the Aspire Housing website.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.		N/A	No significant changes have been made.
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.		N/A	No request has been received.
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	This forms part of our Business Continuity Plan and would be part of our approach to managing such incidents

## 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 23 – March 24	Learning from complaints is identified and considered by the quarterly complaints panel.
9.2	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.	Yes	Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy Corporate Plan 2030  Customer Promises	This is reinforced through our policy and corporate plan 2030.
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	Yes	Performance Reports to OASIS and CARE Annual complaints Performance Report	Regular discussion takes place with our customer groups OASIS and CARE.
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	Customer Relations Team  High-level Oversight and Unresolved Situation Experts (HOUSE)	The role of 'complaints officer' is assumed by the Customer Relations Managers/team  This team reports directly to the Executive Director for 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.  Senior management team (HOUSE) meet weekly to review unresolved and complex cases

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary/explanation
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 has an MRC on its Board	This role has been appointed to.
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 roles and responsibilities – Terms of Reference (TOR)	Working arrangements and expectations are being developed in collaboration with the MRC and will align with the code.
9.7	<p>As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;</li> <li>• regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;</li> <li>• regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and</li> <li>• annual complaints performance and service improvement report.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>Aspire Housing has an MRC on its Board</p> <p>MRC roles and responsibilities – Terms of Reference (TOR)</p>	This role has been appointed to. Working arrangements and expectations are being developed in collaboration with the MRC and will align with the code.
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"> <li>• have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</li> <li>• take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and</li> <li>• act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.</li> </ul>	Yes	Corporate Plan 2030 Complaint Handling Charter	This is reinforced through our Corporate Plan 2030 and Complaint Handling Charter.

## Further support and information:

### Housing

Ombudsman Service

For more information on how the Housing Ombudsman provides support for resident complaints, visit:

[www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

We always welcome feedback:

[www.aspirehousing.co.uk/contact-us](http://www.aspirehousing.co.uk/contact-us)

**How are  
we doing?**



[www.aspirehousing.co.uk](http://www.aspirehousing.co.uk)  
01782 635 200

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June 2024

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