

Appendix A: Self-assessment form

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and it must be reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body at least annually.


Once approved, landlords must publish the self-assessment as part of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report on their website. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.

Landlords are required to complete the self-assessment in full and support all statements with evidence, with additional commentary as necessary.

We recognise that there may be a small number of circumstances where landlords are unable to meet the requirements, for example, if they do not have a website. In these circumstances, we expect landlords to deliver the intentions of the Code in an alternative way, for example by publishing information in a public area so that it is easily accessible.

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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 4 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy states the complaint definition that we use, which mirrors the Housing Ombudsman recommendation.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk)	We ask Tenants to tell us if something is not right, and we will assess it using the Housing Ombudsman criteria for what is a complaint and what is a service request. A tenant does not need to use the word complaint, but we will confirm with them if it is or if it isn’t and what they should expect. This is handled through a non-bias approach by our Customer Care Officer. Page 5 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy states that someone can complain on your behalf as long as the tenant gives permission for them to do so.
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	Yes	Customer Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 4 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy states the complaint definition that we use, which mirrors the Housing Ombudsman recommendation and the definition of service request including some examples.

	to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.			
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 4 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy states the definition of service request including some examples, as well as confirmation that we will ask them to come back to us if there is an issue or a reoccurring problem.
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 charter (wokingham.gov.uk) 	<p>Wokingham Borough Council has a Customer Charter which sets out our commitment to listening to feedback from our Residents as well as our commitment to provide a good service. This sits alongside the Complaints process.</p> <p>This poster and QR code was created for us to take along to all Tenant Engagement events, Parish Fetes and Pop ups. This is so that we continually advertise to our tenants that not only is it important to engage with us through events, but that they can also make a complaint.</p>

Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk)	Correspondence is reviewed by the Customer Care Team to ensure a non-bias approach and using the complaint definition within our Complaints Policy. Please see Page 8 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy to state what we wouldn't accept as a complaint.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk)	<p>Page 8 & 9 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy states any matters that do not fall under the complaints policy and therefore cannot be considered as a Complaint.</p> <p>Page 5 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy also states that for most complaints you would need to complaint within 12 months of the matter happening.</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 excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints	Yes	Customer Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 5 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy also states that for most complaints you would need to complain within 12 months of the matter happening. It also states that if there has been a good reason that they haven't been

	made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.			able to, to still get in touch and we will, where possible, apply discretion.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Within the Wokingham Borough Council Joint Complaint Policy and on all Complaint Templates it states that we follow the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code and that any Tenant may contact them at any time during the complaint process.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Customer Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 4 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy states the complaint definition that we use, which mirrors the Housing Ombudsman recommendation.

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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	<p>Page 5, Section 2 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy states all of the different channels through which a Tenant can make a complaint.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online complaint form - Phone - Email - Letter

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Face to Face Meeting Request - Website contacts visible
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Wokingham Borough Council Housing Services has an independent Customer Care Officer who sits within the Housing Partnerships and Engagement Team. The Service Manager for this team attends Senior Manager meetings and ensures that complaints management and how to make complaints is embedded in Operational and Strategic Management teams.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 10, Section 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy states that Wokingham Borough Council will produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement Report. This will include service improvements made because of the feedback through complaints. Operational and Strategic Housing have also developed a lessons learned feedback form that is completed during the Complaints process to show where service improvements could be and have been made.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk) ERUK Final draft complaints.pages (wokingham.gov.uk)	<p>Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each.</p> <p>Wokingham Borough Council also have an Easy Read document version of the Joint Complaints Policy, to</p>

				support any Tenants across the Borough.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy, all Complaints response template letters, and the complaint webpages all mention the ability to contact the Housing Ombudsman at any time, the contact details, and provide a link to the Housing Ombudsman website for more information. We also regularly share articles in our Housing Matters Magazine, on posters and on leaflets at events.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 5 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy states that someone can complain on your behalf, represent them or accompany them as long as the tenant gives permission for them to do so.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy, all Complaints response template letters, and the complaint webpages all mention the ability to contact the Housing Ombudsman at any time, the contact details, and a link to the Housing Ombudsman website for more information. We also regularly share articles in our Housing Matters Magazine, on posters and leaflets at events.

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	Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Wokingham Borough Council Housing Services has an independent Customer Care Officer who sits within the Housing Partnerships and Engagement Team. All Housing Ombudsman engagement and responses to requests are completed by this team. Key Performance Indicators / Reporting and Compliance Data on complaints is collated by this team and reported to internal Governance Structure including the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel, Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Corporate Leadership Teams and Senior Managers.
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	Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Wokingham Borough Council Housing Services has an independent Customer Care Officer who sits within the Housing Partnerships and Engagement Team. The Service Manager for this team attends Senior Manager meetings and ensures that complaints management, learning from complaints, outcomes, and service improvements are embedded in Operational and Strategic Management teams. A weekly report is sent to all Service Managers and Head of Service along with the Assistant Director for Economy and Housing. Fortnightly

				meetings include an agenda item to discuss complaints.
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		We currently have a Housing Improvement Programme running with Complaints Handling, learning from complaints, service improvements, policy updates, communications and engagement with Tenants set up as one strand	<p>Wokingham Borough Council Operational and Strategic Housing Team Managers complete training with the Customer Care Team, the Housing Ombudsman, HQN, CIH, etc. They also actively attend recommended conferences and webinars.</p> <p>The Service Manager - Housing Partnerships and Engagement attends Senior Manager / Governance meetings and ensures that complaints management, learning from complaints, outcomes, and service improvements are embedded in Operational and Strategic Management teams.</p> <p>A weekly report is sent to all Service Managers and Head of Service along with the Assistant Director for Economy and Housing. Fortnightly meetings include an agenda item to discuss complaints.</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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk)	Wokingham Borough Council has a joint complaints policy for Tenants and Residents which follows the Housing Ombudsman and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code.

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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	<p>Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each.</p> <p>Wokingham Borough Council's Customer Care Team handle complaints across the service and include information, and responses from those acting upon or working for the business within one overall complaint response, this is to ensure a full and thorough investigation and service improvements as necessary.</p>
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	Customer Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	<p>Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council's joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each.</p> <p>Wokingham Borough Council Customer Care Team handle complaints across the service and</p>

				include information, and responses from those acting upon or working for the business within one overall complaint response, this is to ensure a full and thorough investigation and service improvements as necessary.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	This is a fundamental part of the Wokingham Borough Council Housing Service Template Letters. The Customer Care Officer reviews each stage with the tenant and adds any additional information as necessary.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	This is a fundamental part of the Wokingham Borough Council Housing Service Template Letters. The Customer Care Officer reviews each stage with the tenant and adds any additional information as necessary. This may include anything that cannot be handled through the complaint process.
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and 	Yes	Customer Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 10, Section 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy states that Wokingham Borough Council will produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement Report. This will include service improvements made because of the feedback through complaints. Operational and Strategic Housing have also developed a lessons learned feedback form that is completed during

	d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.			<p>the Complaints process to show where service improvements could be and have been made. This also includes areas for improvement within the complaint process, being transparent about lack of action or additional actions taken. These forms will be saved against the complaints and provided to the Housing Ombudsman in the event of a request for information or through an active investigation.</p> <p>The training from the Housing Ombudsman and other relevant parties has been critical in providing this culture change as well as from the new Management structure within the Housing Service Teams</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	<p>Customer Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk)</p> <p>Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)</p>	<p>Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each. This also includes how requests for additional time will be requested. The Customer Care Officer will receive a delay request from a Manager, this must be signed off by the Head of Service before they can then confirm it with the Tenant. Delays are not requested unless this process has been followed and the Tenant has accepted the delay. Delays are monitored by the Governing body The Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel.</p> <p>All delay requests are confirmed in writing with new timescales agreed.</p>

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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	<p>We have a Reasonable Adjustments Policy sitting alongside the Joint Complaints Policy. This is currently up for review to ensure it aligns with any new Housing Ombudsman Guidance.</p> <p>Page 3 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms our promise to Residents. Our Customer Care Officer will always ask a Tenant who is making a complaint whether they need any reasonable adjustments. These are noted and passed on to the complaint handling manager.</p>
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	<p>Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each.</p> <p>Wokingham Borough Council will escalate a complaint as soon as a Tenant requests it. However, they will gain agreement from the Tenant if they feel more can be done at an earlier stage or if an independent review might be needed from another Manager to ensure the Tenant has been listened / all actions have been completed.</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	Yes		<p>The Customer Care Officer keeps detailed records under the unique complaint reference number (which is issued to both the Tenant and the Manager handling the complaint). All correspondence is filed under this unique reference number, and update</p>

	any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.			reports with timescales are shared with Managers on a weekly basis.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	<p>Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each.</p> <p>Wokingham Borough Council will escalate a complaint as soon as a Tenant requests it. However, they will gain agreement from the Tenant if they feel more can be done at an earlier stage or if an independent review might be needed from another Manager to ensure the Tenant has been listened / all actions have been completed.</p> <p>The Customer Care Officer and the Service Manager – Housing Partnerships and Engagement meet daily to discuss individual complaints. Any concerns are discussed and escalated to the Heads of Service.</p> <p>Page 10, Section 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy states that Wokingham Borough Council will produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement Report. This will include service improvements made because of the feedback through complaints. Operational and Strategic Housing have also developed a lessons learned</p>

				feedback form that is completed during the Complaints process to show where service improvements could be and have been made. This also includes areas for improvement within the complaint process, being transparent about lack of action or additional actions taken. These forms will be saved against the complaints and provided the Housing Ombudsman in the event of a request for information or through an active investigation.
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	Unreasonably Persistent Complaints Policy.pdf (wokingham.gov.uk)	Wokingham Borough Council has a central Unreasonably persistent Complaints Policy. The Operational and Strategic Housing Team are currently developing an unreasonable Behaviour Policy using guidance from the Housing Ombudsman Service. This will be published once it has been reviewed by the Tenant Volunteer groups and the Governing Body – The Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel
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	Unreasonably Persistent Complaints Policy.pdf (wokingham.gov.uk)	Wokingham Borough Council has a central Unreasonably persistent Complaints Policy. The Operational and Strategic Housing Team are currently developing an unreasonable Behaviour Policy using guidance from the Housing Ombudsman Service. This will be published once it has been reviewed by the Tenant Volunteer groups and the Governing Body – The Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel

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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each. Reasonable adjustments will be made for vulnerable tenants according to their requested needs.
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	Customer Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Customer Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each. Reasonable adjustments will be made for vulnerable tenants according to their requested needs.
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	Yes	Customer Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each. This also includes how requests for additional time will be requested. The

	10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.			<p>Customer Care Officer will receive a delay request from a Manager, this must be signed off by the Head of Service before they can then confirm it with the Tenant. Delays are not requested unless this process has been followed and the Tenant has accepted the delay. Delays are monitored by the Governing body The Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel.</p> <p>All delay requests are confirmed in writing with new timescales agreed.</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	<p>Customer Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk)</p> <p>Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)</p>	<p>Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each. This also includes how requests for additional time will be requested. The Customer Care Officer will receive a delay request from a Manager, this must be signed off by the Head of Service before they can then confirm it with the Tenant. Delays are not requested unless this process has been followed and the Tenant has accepted the delay. Delays are monitored by the Governing body The Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel.</p> <p>All delay requests are confirmed in writing with new timescales agreed. All correspondence with Tenants includes the full contact details of the Housing Ombudsman Service.</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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	<p>Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each.</p> <p>Wokingham Borough Council will escalate a complaint as soon as a Tenant requests it. However, they will gain agreement from the Tenant if they feel more can be done at an earlier stage or if an independent review might be needed from another Manager to ensure the Tenant has been listened / all actions have been completed.</p> <p>The Customer Care Officer and the Service Manager – Housing Partnerships and Engagement meet daily to discuss individual complaints. Any concerns are discussed and escalated to the Heads of Service.</p> <p>The Customer Care Officer keeps in touch with the Tenant all throughout the Complaint process. Formal responses / updates (whether complete or waiting for additional information) will be provided to the tenant.</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	Customer Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	<p>The Customer Care Officer and the Service Manager – Housing Partnerships and Engagement meet daily to discuss individual complaints. All complaint acknowledgements and responses include reasons (using the Housing Ombudsman Complaint</p>

				Handling Code complaint definition) why it is a complaint, any decisions and what law, relevant policy and good practice where appropriate. Any concerns are discussed and escalated to the Heads of Service.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	<p>Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each. It also includes information about when it is reasonable to request from the tenant that Stage 1 continues with the additional complaints, whether they are added to the Stage 2 review and investigated or whether a new complaint is to be set up with a new unique reference number.</p> <p>Wokingham Borough Council will escalate a complaint as soon as a Tenant requests it. However, they will gain agreement from the Tenant if they feel more can be done at an earlier stage or if an independent review might be needed from another Manager to ensure the Tenant has been listened / all actions have been completed.</p>
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"> a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; 	Yes		All template letters used by the Customer Care Officer, and the Manager handling the complaint include this information. These letters have been agreed through our Tenant Volunteers within the Communications Group.

	d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.			
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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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	<p>Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each. This also includes how requests for additional time will be requested. The Customer Care Officer will receive a delay request from a Manager, this must be signed off by the Head of Service before they can then confirm it with the Tenant. Delays are not requested unless this process has been followed and the Tenant has accepted the delay. Delays are monitored by the Governing body The Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel.</p> <p>All delay requests are confirmed in writing with new timescales agreed. All correspondence with Tenants</p>

				includes the full contact details of the Housing Ombudsman Service.
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	Customer Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	<p>The Customer Care Officer and the Service Manager – Housing Partnerships and Engagement meet daily to discuss individual complaints. When a complaint is escalated to Stage 2, a Service Manager from a different service is asked to volunteer to review the Stage 2 or a complaint. I.e. a repairs complaint may be reviewed at Stage 2 by the Service Manager for the Rental Income Service.</p> <p>Operational and Strategic Housing have also developed a lessons learned feedback form that is completed during the Complaints process to show where service improvements could be and have been made. This also includes areas for improvement within the</p>


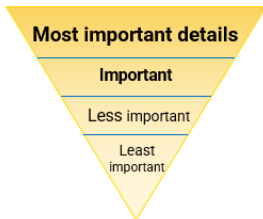
				complaint process, being transparent about lack of action or additional actions taken. These forms will be saved against the complaints and provided the Stage 2 Reviewing Manager to assess and complete as part of the process. This will also be provided to the Housing Ombudsman in the event of a request for information or through an active investigation.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each. This also includes how requests for additional time will be requested. The Customer Care Officer will receive a delay request from a Manager, this must be signed off by the Head of Service before they can then confirm it with the Tenant. Delays are not requested unless this process has been followed and the Tenant has accepted the delay. Delays are monitored by the Governing body The Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel.

				<p>All delay requests are confirmed in writing with new timescales agreed.</p> <p>All correspondence with Tenants includes the full contact details of the Housing Ombudsman Service.</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		<p>All delay requests are confirmed in writing with new timescales agreed.</p> <p>All correspondence with Tenants includes the full contact details of the Housing Ombudsman Service.</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	<p>Customer Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk)</p> <p>Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)</p>	<p>Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each.</p> <p>Wokingham Borough Council will escalate a complaint as soon as a Tenant requests it. However, they will gain agreement from the Tenant if they feel more can be done at an earlier stage or if an independent review might be needed from another Manager to ensure the Tenant has been listened / all actions have been completed.</p> <p>The Customer Care Officer and the Service Manager – Housing Partnerships and Engagement meet daily to discuss individual complaints. Any concerns are discussed and escalated to the Heads of Service.</p> <p>The Customer Care Officer keeps in touch with the Tenant all throughout the Complaint process. Formal responses / updates (whether complete or waiting for additional</p>

				information) will be provided to the tenant.
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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	The Customer Care Officer and the Service Manager – Housing Partnerships and Engagement meet daily to discuss individual complaints. All complaint acknowledgements and responses include reasons (using the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code complaint definition) why it is a complaint, any decisions and what law, relevant policy and good practice where appropriate. Any concerns are discussed and escalated to the Heads of Service.
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied. 	Yes		All template letters used by the Customer Care Officer, and the Manager handling the complaint include this information. These letters have been agreed through our Tenant Volunteers within the Communications Group.
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff	Yes	Customer Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk)	The Customer Care Officer and the Service Manager – Housing

	members needed to issue such a response.		Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	<p>Partnerships and Engagement meet daily to discuss individual complaints. When a complaint is escalated to Stage 2, a Service Manager from a different service is asked to volunteer to review the Stage 2 or a complaint. I.e. a repairs complaint may be reviewed at Stage 2 by the Service Manager for the Rental Income Service.</p> <p>Operational and Strategic Housing have also developed a lessons learned feedback form that is completed during the Complaints process to show where service improvements could be and have been made. This also includes areas for improvement within the complaint process, being transparent about lack of action or additional actions taken. These forms will be saved against the complaints and provided the Stage 2 Reviewing Manager to assess and complete as part of the process. This will also be provided to the Housing Ombudsman in the event of a request for information or through an active investigation.</p> <p>The Stage 2 response will come from the Stage 2 reviewing Manager and will include responses from any additional investigating Manager as necessary. For instance, if the complaint involves multiple teams.</p>
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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; • Taking action if there has been 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	 <p>WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL</p> <p>The local council</p> <p>Priority order for your customer</p> <div> <p>Structure B</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thank you / acknowledgement 2. Apology and/or empathy 3. Decision / resolution 4. Explanation 5. Next steps 6. Contact details </div> <div> <p>The inverted pyramid</p>  </div>	<p>Wokingham Borough Council is training all staff across the company on the 3C's – Care, Clarity and Confidence, which is about setting the right tone when communicating with internal and external customers. Part of this training (the trainings completed by colleagues who are Managers and Officers who handle complaints) includes the priority order on how to respond to a complaint. Please see the example slides from the training. 50 sessions of this training have been completed in the last 2 years.</p> <p>The contact details also include what to do if you are unable with the response and the contact details of the Housing Ombudsman or Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman</p>
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes		<p>We have a compensation policy in progress which is based on the guidance given by the Housing Ombudsman. This will be published on the website once it has been agreed and passed through the Governance procedure including the formal Tenant Groups.</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 Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk) Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)	<p>Page 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy confirms that there are 2 stages and the timescales that are used for each.</p> <p>The Customer Care Officer will stay in touch with the Tenant all throughout the process.</p> <p>The Customer Care Officer and the Service Manager – Housing Partnerships and Engagement meet daily to discuss individual complaints. Any concerns are discussed and escalated to the Heads of Service. I.e. if remedies are proposed that need to be monitored.</p>
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes		<p>We have a compensation policy in progress which is based on the guidance given by the Housing Ombudsman. This will be published on the website once it has been agreed and passed through the Governance procedure including the formal Tenant Groups.</p>


Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance



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		<p>Page 10, Section 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy states that Wokingham Borough Council will produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement</p>


	<p>a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.</p> <p>b. 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;</p> <p>c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;</p> <p>d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;</p> <p>e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and</p> <p>f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.</p>	Yes		<p>Report. This will include service improvements made because of the feedback through complaints.</p> <p>The self-assessment will be published on the Wokingham Borough Council website once completed and reviewed by the Governance Structure. Any comments from this group will be added as a separate document in the same place.</p> <p>Operational and Strategic Housing have also developed a lessons learned feedback form that is completed during the Complaints process to show where service improvements could be and have been made. This also includes areas for improvement within the complaint process, being transparent about lack of action or additional actions taken. These forms will be saved against the complaints and provided the Housing Ombudsman in the event of a request for information or through an active investigation.</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.			<p>Page 10, Section 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy states that Wokingham Borough Council will produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement Report. This will include service improvements made because of the feedback through complaints.</p>
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant	Yes		<p>This would be completed in the event of any changes to Policies, the Landlord or procedures</p>

	restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.			
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes		Wokingham Borough Council will complete all requests of 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		Wokingham Borough Council will follow this guidance in the event of exceptional circumstances and inform all those effected as well as the Housing Ombudsman.

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	 Stage 1 and Stage 2 Complaints - lesson:	Operational and Strategic Housing have developed a lessons learned feedback form that is completed during the Complaints process to show where service improvements could be and have been made. This also includes areas for improvement within the complaint process, being transparent about lack of action or additional actions taken. These forms will be saved against the complaints and provided the Housing Ombudsman in the event of a request for information or through an active investigation.

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	 <p>Stage 1 and Stage 2 Complaints - lesson:</p>	Operational and Strategic Housing have also developed a lessons learned feedback form that is completed during the Complaints process to show where service improvements could be and have been made. This also includes areas for improvement within the complaint process, being transparent about lack of action or additional actions taken. These forms will be saved against the complaints and provided the Housing Ombudsman in the event of a request for information or through an active investigation.
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	 <p>Stage 1 and Stage 2 Complaints - lesson:</p>	<p>Operational and Strategic Housing have also developed a lessons learned feedback form that is completed during the Complaints process to show where service improvements could be and have been made. This also includes areas for improvement within the complaint process, being transparent about lack of action or additional actions taken. These forms will be saved against the complaints and provided the Housing Ombudsman in the event of a request for information or through an active investigation.</p> <p>All complaints performance figures are reported through the Governance Structure which includes the Performance Improvement Panel (made up of Tenant Volunteers and lead by the Performance and Policy Officer), the Governing body for Housing – The Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel – Chaired by a Tenant Volunteer and members include Councillors, Council staff and other Tenant Volunteer</p>

				Chairs or Vice Chairpersons. Other scrutiny is through the quarterly reports to the Corporate Leadership Team, and to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Councillors)
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		Our Head of Strategic Housing is accountable for the complaint handling for Housing, including learning from complaints, reporting, lessons learned, training and the update of any relevant policies and procedures. This ensures that Wokingham Borough Council continues to have a non-biased approach to the overview of complaints handling, lessons learned, service improvements, as well as official requests for independent reviews of individual complaints if concerns are raised.
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		Our Assistant Director – Economy and Housing is the landlord partner within the Governing body – the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel. As well as being a member of TLIP, they also have overall responsibility for managing the Operational and Strategic Housing teams. These responsibilities including being the sponsor for the Housing Improvement Programme, where, all the of the improvements coming from complaints, surveys, and the Tenant Satisfaction Measures are reviewed and implemented.
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	 Stage 1 and Stage 2 Complaints - lesson:	Operational and Strategic Housing have also developed a lessons learned feedback form that is completed during the Complaints process to show where service improvements could be and have been made. This also includes areas for improvement within the complaint process, being transparent about lack of action or additional actions taken. These forms will be

				<p>saved against the complaints and provided the Housing Ombudsman in the event of a request for information or through an active investigation.</p> <p>All complaints performance figures are reported through the Governance Structure which includes the Performance Improvement Panel (made up of Tenant Volunteers and lead by the Performance and Policy Officer), the Governing body for Housing – The Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel – Chaired by a Tenant Volunteer and members include Councillors, Council staff and other Tenant Volunteer Chairs or Vice Chairpersons. Other scrutiny is through the quarterly reports to the Corporate Leadership Team, and to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Councillors)</p>
9.7	<p>As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report. 	Yes	<p>Customer Voice Complaints Policy - March 2024 (wokingham.gov.uk)</p> <p>Housing complaints (wokingham.gov.uk)</p>	<p>The Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel are the Governing Body for Housing and include a Tenant Volunteer Chair (Tenant Partner) and the Housing Portfolio Holder (Councillor representative) as well as the Assistant Director – Economy and Housing (as Landlord representative) – this partnership meets monthly. They receive Key Performance Indicators for complaints handling. In the future they will also receive trends rising from complaints handling, as well as service improvements, changes and lessons learned.</p> <p>The Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel receive monthly updates on all complaints handling including Housing Ombudsman investigations and outcomes. Page 10, Section 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council joint complaints policy</p>

				states that Wokingham Borough Council will produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement Report. This will include service improvements made because of the feedback through complaints.
9.8	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to: a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.	Yes		<p>Wokingham Borough Council Operational and Strategic Housing Team Managers complete training with the Customer Care Team, the Housing Ombudsman, HQN, CIH, etc. They also actively attend recommended conferences and webinars.</p> <p>The Service Manager - Housing Partnerships and Engagement attends Senior Manager / Governance meetings and ensures that complaints management, learning from complaints, outcomes, and service improvements are embedded in Operational and Strategic Management teams.</p> <p>A weekly report is sent to all Service Managers and Head of Service along with the Assistant Director for Economy and Housing. Fortnightly meetings include an agenda item to discuss complaints.</p>