



# Introduction

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# Complaint handling requirements



- Importance of complaint handling by landlords has increased since Grenfell and strengthened further in the social housing regulation act 2023
- The Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, influence and accountability consumer standard includes the importance of complaint handling as well as learning from complaints
- Housing Ombudsman strengthened and code of practise made statutory for all social landlords

# Housing Ombudsman

- The Housing Ombudsman Service is set up by law to look at complaints about housing organisations.
- The service is free, independent and impartial.
- The Housing Ombudsman resolves disputes involving the tenants and leaseholders of social landlords (housing associations and local authorities).
- Residents and landlords can contact the Ombudsman at any time for support in helping to resolve a dispute.
- It is mandatory for all local authorities and registered social housing providers to be members of the Ombudsman Scheme.

# Housing Ombudsman

## Ombudsman services for tenants

- Dispute support
- providing advice and guidance to residents and landlords while complaints are within the landlord's complaints procedure
- holding landlords to account if they do not follow their published procedures and respond in a timely manner by issuing complaint handling failure orders to require action by landlords on individual cases
- Offering additional support and conducts intervention work with landlords to improve complaints handling
- Acts as the initial point of assessment for cases that have exhausted the landlord's complaints process

## Dispute resolution

- undertakes formal investigations into cases that have been referred and remain unresolved following completion of a landlord's internal complaints procedure

# Housing Ombudsman

Since 2020 the Housing Ombudsman has published a **Complaint Handling Code** – they have updated this several times since

- All social housing landlords have to carry out and publish a self-assessment on how well they are meeting the standards set by the Housing Ombudsman for complaint handling.
- The Complaint Handling Code also provides a guide to residents of what to expect if they make a complaint, as well as improving access and awareness to the procedure when they need it

# Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code

- The Code has been revised and strengthened over the past few years and, following new legislation brought in by The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, and the Code became statutory from 1 April 2024.
- Landlords are now obliged by law to follow its requirements and must submit a copy of its self-assessment to the Housing Ombudsman on an annual basis.
- Landlords must also submit a **complaint performance and service improvement report and their governing body's response**.
- We are required to publish these documents on our website and the 2024 versions are available at the link below.

<https://www.chesterfield.gov.uk/housing/about-our-housing-service/housing-ombudsman-and-complaints/>

# Housing Ombudsman self assessment

- A link to the full complaint handling code, and our Spring 2024 assessment will be provided
- The sections in yellow are ones where changes were needed to ensure compliance
- There were quite a few gaps in this assessment – this was common across landlords as the HO only gave landlords 6 week notice of the changes to the code!
- The self assessment will need re-doing in April 2025



# Housing Ombudsman – action plan



To address the gaps in the self assessment an action plan was developed

A copy of the current progress against this action plan is provided

Progress has been positive in many areas and compliance with the code is improved

Still areas of work and actions to undertake during Q4 to improve compliance further – including appointment of a housing complaints officer

# Complaints Performance

- Three documents to review:
  - Item 5b Housing Ombudsman Complaint handling Code – Compliance Action Plan
  - Item 5c Quarterly complaints performance reporting 2024/25
  - Item 5d Complaints reasons analysis