

## Chesterfield Borough Council's self-assessment Housing Ombudsman Code, March 2026

### 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	<p>The definition in our Complaints Policy is:</p> <p><i>an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.</i></p> <p>The information on our webpage also uses this definition</p>	
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	<p><a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a></p> <p>Our policy states that we accept complaints made by advocates or a third party who are authorised to act on the complainants' behalf (e.g. councillors), and these will also be actioned in line with the Complaints Policy</p> <p>CBC has adopted the Housing Ombudsman definition of a complaint</p>	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
			<p>which does not require the word complaint to be used</p> <p>Training to all staff regarding offering choice to make a complaint where dissatisfaction expressed</p> <p>Our policy states:  <i>A customer does not have to use the word complaint for it to be treated as such and when expressing dissatisfaction with a council service will be given a choice to make a complaint.</i></p>	
1.4	<p>Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.</p>	Yes	<p><a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a></p> <p>CBC recognises the difference between a service request, where a resident may be unhappy with a situation that they wish to have rectified, and a complaint about the service they have/have not received. This is explained in the policy. Service Requests are recorded on the same system as complaints and can be moved between the two in accordance with definition. Monitoring of complaints that are changed to service requests are recorded/can be monitored.</p>	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	<p>Service requests are still dealt with even if a complaint is raised.</p> <p>Training has been given to all staff regarding offering choice to make a complaint where dissatisfaction expressed</p> <p>Policy states: Filing a complaint will not interrupt or slow down our handling of your service requests. We will continue to address urgent matters promptly, no matter if you have made a complaint.</p>	
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.	Yes	<p>Dissatisfaction expressed through a survey is not defined as a complaint.</p> <p>Where a specific issue is raised on a survey, the respondent is contacted by the relevant team with the aim of dealing with the issues – if survey responses are not provided on an anonymised basis</p> <p>Details about how to make a complaint are included on new surveys</p>	



## 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	<a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a> All complaints are accepted and investigated with exception of clear exclusions stated in the Complaints Policy. Each complaint is reviewed on receipt by the Housing Complaints Co-ordinator. If a complaint is reclassified as a service request or another reason this is recorded.	
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</li> </ul>	Yes	<a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a> The circumstances under which we will not consider as a complaint are clearly set out in the Complaints Policy and are fair and reasonable. Exclusions are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A request for service</li> <li>• Any issue where legal procedures have already started</li> <li>• Any issue which has previously been fully investigated at Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the complaints procedure</li> <li>• Criminal activity will be referred to the police</li> </ul>	

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	<p>Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaints that a Councillor has broken their Code of Conduct has a separate procedure</li> <li>Any complaints arising out of actions or omissions which occurred more than 12 months previously</li> </ul>	
2.3	<p>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.</p> <p>Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.</p>	Yes	<p><a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a> Reasons for not accepting a complaint are clearly set out in the Complaints Policy and these are explained to the customer if a complaint is not accepted</p> <p>The policy states “Any complaints arising out of actions or omissions which occurred more than 12 months previously will be considered but may be declined”</p>	
2.4	<p>If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints</p>	Yes	<p><a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a> Reasons for not accepting a complaint are clearly set out in the Complaints Policy and these are explained to the customer if a complaint is not accepted.</p>	

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	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.		Ombudsman contact details are provided on all letters If the Ombudsman requests us to take on an unaccepted complaint we will.	
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Each complaint is reviewed on receipt by the Housing Complaints Co-ordinator and progressed on its individual merits.	

### 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	Yes	<a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a> Customers can complain via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online form on the website</li> <li>• MyChesterfield account</li> <li>• By phone</li> <li>• By letter</li> </ul>	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Via an authorised independent advocate or third party</li> <li>• In person at the customer services centre</li> </ul> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment is carried out on all our policies to combat any negative impact. The CBC Equality and Diversity Policy sets out our approach to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and reasonable adjustments are referred to in the policy</p>	
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	<p>Training has been given to all staff regarding offering the choice to make a complaint where dissatisfaction expressed and how to log a complaint or pass on to the appropriate person</p> <p>Complaints training is mandatory for staff</p>	
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	Yes	<p>Complaint volumes and performance are discussed at Strategic Housing Board</p> <p>Complaints process is well-publicised and accessible.</p>	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.			
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	<a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a> The Complaints Policy details all the requirements in 3.4 and is available on the CBC website and available in different formats on request. The complaints link is available on the home page of the website and links to an overview of the process, complaints form, complaints policy and unreasonable complaints policy.	
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	<a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a> Details of the complaints policy, Ombudsman and Code are publicised, and methods mentioned specifically in updated policy.	
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	We accept complaints and communicate with any advocates who are authorised to act on the complainant's behalf or represent them throughout the process.  Our policy states: <i>You can ask someone else to complain on your behalf. If you ask a</i>	

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			<i>third party to help you, we will need your permission to speak to them about your complaint. Any costs will need to be paid for by you unless we have agreed to make a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010.</i>	
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	Letters throughout the complaints process contain contact details for the Housing Ombudsman and state they can contact the Housing Ombudsman at any time. Contact information for the Ombudsman is publicised on the website and letters issued throughout the complaints process.	

## 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	The Housing Strategy and Engagement Team (HSET) are responsible for handling complaints, maintaining the system and liaison with the Housing Ombudsman. The Complaints Policy refers to them as the Complaints Officer.	
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	The HSET have access to all staff at all levels. Complaints are administered by the HSE team who distribute them to the relevant Service Areas who will investigate and handle the complaint. They have the authority and autonomy to resolve disputes – or access to Managers who do.	
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	Yes	Introduction of complaints as standardised item on management meeting agendas Training for Managers/Complaint Handlers has been delivered which	

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	importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively		covers importance of complaints and learning.  Dedicated staff deal with complaints in Housing Property Services and HSET so complaints are handled effectively	

## 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	<a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a> A single corporate complaints policy is in place covering all Housing complaints. Residents are not treated differently if they complain.	
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	<a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a> Where a complaint can be resolved at initial contact it will be. If it can't, it is logged as a Stage 1 complaint within five days of receipt. An acknowledgement letter is sent to the customer confirming that their complaint has been received and the next steps.	
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	<a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a> The complaints process has 2 stages	
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any	N/A	Complaints are not handled by third parties	

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	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.			
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	N/A	As above	
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	<p>The Complaints Policy states:  Stage one – investigation and resolution  <i>If we are unsure what you want us to do to resolve your complaint we will ask you to confirm this.</i></p> <p>Stage two – escalation  <i>Whilst you are not required to provide a reason for a request to escalate the complaint to stage two, we will set out our understanding about your complaint and the outcomes you are seeking to resolve it and may contact you to do so.</i></p> <p>If the reason for the complaint is</p>	

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			unclear or if further information is needed, the customer is contacted to clarify this. This is detailed in the acknowledgement.	
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	<p>Acknowledgement letters set out the definition of the complaint and the Housing Complaints Co-ordinator will clarify areas where we are not responsible.</p> <p>Our policy states:</p> <p>Stage 1  <i>We will set out our understanding about your complaint and the outcomes you are seeking to resolve it. If we are unsure what you want us to do to resolve your complaint we will ask you to confirm this. We will also advise whether parts of the complaint concerns aspects we are not responsible for.</i></p> <p>Stage 2  <i>Whilst you are not required to provide a reason for a request to escalate the complaint to stage two,</i></p>	

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			<p><i>we will set out our understanding about your complaint and the outcomes you are seeking to resolve it and may contact you to do so. If required, we will also advise whether parts of the complaint escalation request concerns aspects we are not responsible for</i></p>	
5.8	<p>At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;</li> <li>b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position;</li> <li>c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and</li> <li>d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>Complaint handlers aim to deal with complaints in line with a,b,c, and d at 5.8</p> <p>Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints are conducted impartially. Where a complaint cannot be resolved at Stage 1, it is reviewed at Stage 2 by a manager not connected to the original investigation.</p> <p>Every complaint is investigated thoroughly and independently in a confidential manner without bias, taking into account all the information and evidence before a decision is made. Staff are trained in GDPR to ensure compliance with each complaint</p>	

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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>The Housing Complaints Co-ordinator keeps the tenant informed of any extensions required and updates on complaint timescales</p> <p>Our complaint policy states <i>"If it is not possible to complete the review within this timescale, we will let you know, explain the reasons why and agree a timescale for keeping you informed."</i></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	<p>Reasonable adjustments will be made to reflect the needs of the individual customer, as required. This is detailed on page four of the complaints policy. Reasonable Adjustments are recorded on the Housing Management System.</p> <p>Reasonable adjustment question is asked at logging stage on complaints system</p>	
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints	Yes	<p><a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a></p> <p>The reasons for not escalating a complaint are outlined in the</p>	

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	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.		Complaints Policy and are the same as the reasons for not accepting a complaint as per the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. The reasons for any refusal to escalate are confirmed in writing to the customer	
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	A full record of each complaint is retained and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of the original complaint including the date received</li> <li>• Copies of all correspondence</li> <li>• Outcome of the complaint (These are held on the complaints system)</li> <li>• Details of the investigation</li> <li>• Details of any actions taken/outstanding actions</li> <li>• Supporting documentation</li> </ul>	
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	Yes	Complaints can be remedied at any stage of the complaints process for resolution.	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.			
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	<a href="#">Link to unreasonable complaints policy page</a> An Unreasonable Complaints Policy which covers unacceptable behaviour from residents when pursuing a complaint is in place. This is referred to in the Complaints Policy. Restrictions are reviewed in line with specified timescales	
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	As above Single point of contact can be applied by Legal team through Staff Caution List and are proportionate	

## 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	Where a complaint can be resolved at initial contact it will be. Low % of cases progressing to stage 2 Complaints are allocated to services to determine responses and timescales. Vulnerability policy in place and training includes considering vulnerability and complexity	
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the complaint being received.	Yes	Stage 1 complaints are logged within five days of receipt. An acknowledgement letter is sent to the customer confirming that their complaint has been received and the next steps. Complaint is defined at acknowledgement stage The Complaints Policy states: <i>Stage one – investigation and resolution</i> We will acknowledge your complaint within five working days, either by	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
			telephone or in writing. We will set out our understanding about your complaint and the outcomes you are seeking to resolve it.	
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	<a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a> The Complaints policy states: We aim to respond to your complaint within ten working days of acknowledging it. This timeframe is conveyed to the customer in the acknowledgment letter and/or the acknowledgement email.	
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	The Complaints Policy states: If the complaint can't be completed within this time, then we will apply an extension of a maximum of ten working days explaining the reasons why. Where extensions are applied, ICT system extends by 10 working days and explanation letter/email is sent to resident.	
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be	Yes	All complaints letters contain the contact details for the Ombudsman including the extension letters	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.			
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	<p>The customer receives a written response (unless they have advised otherwise) once the outcome is known.</p> <p>Resolution of outstanding actions in complaint response not tracked within complaint system but by Service Area. Improvements to 'whole complaint' being held in one place being considered.</p> <p>Stage one complaints – Our policy states:  <i>"You will receive a full written response from the person investigating your complaint, when the answer is known unless you tell us otherwise. The response we give will make it clear if the complaint is upheld or not and how we intend to put matters right. The service area responding to the complaint will remain responsible for keeping the customer up to date on any</i></p>	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
			<i>outstanding actions arising from the complaint.</i>	
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	We aim to address each point individually in the Stage 1 conclusion letter with a clear and concise response, confirming any decisions or actions to be undertaken and with reference to any relevant policy, law and good practice procedures where required.	
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	Any additional complaints raised by the customer whilst investigations at Stage 1 are being completed will be recorded and responded to as part of the Stage 1 response. If the Stage 1 response has already been issued or if this would delay our response within the specified timescales then this will be logged as a new complaint and investigated separately. Our policy states: <i>If additional related issues are raised during the stage one complaints process, we will seek to address them within the response. If the issues are unrelated or are</i>	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
			<i>raised after the stage one response has been issued we will raise a further stage one complaint</i>	
6.9	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the complaint stage;</li> <li>b. the complaint definition;</li> <li>c. the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>d. the reasons for any decisions made;</li> <li>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</li> <li>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</li> <li>g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>The stage 1 completion letter outlines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The stage of the complaint</li> <li>• The complaint definition</li> <li>•The decisions made</li> <li>•The reasons for the decisions</li> <li>•Details of any remedy offered to put things right</li> <li>•Details of any outstanding actions and timescales</li> <li>•Details of how to escalate to stage 2 if they are not happy with the response</li> </ul>	

## 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	A complaint will be escalated to Stage 2 at the customer's request, unless it is refused in line with the list of exclusions outlined in the Complaints Policy. The Stage 2 letter is our final response	
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	Requests for a stage 2 escalation are acknowledged, defined and logged within 5 working days of the request being received.  Our policy states <i>"As with stage one complaints we will acknowledge receipt within five working days, either by telephone or in writing."</i>	
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	On receipt of an escalation request, if the reasons for the request are not clear, the complainant is contacted to confirm the reasons for the request and why they are not happy with the Stage 1 response. This will be confirmed in writing in the acknowledgment. If the complainant does not give a reason their complaint is still	

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			<p>escalated to a Manager to investigate at Stage 2</p> <p>Our policy states  <i>"Whilst you are not required to provide a reason for a request to escalate the complaint to stage two, we will set out our understanding about your complaint and the outcomes you are seeking to resolve it and may contact you to do so."</i></p>	
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	The findings of the Stage 1 investigation will be reviewed by another Manager. This person will have had no prior involvement in the case.	
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <b><u>within 20 working days</u></b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Our policy states: <i>Your stage two complaint review will be dealt with within twenty working days from acknowledgment.</i>	
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.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: If the stage two complaint response cannot be completed within this time, then we will apply an extension of a maximum of twenty working days explaining the	

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	Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.		reasons why. If it is not possible to complete the review within this timescale, we will let you know and explain the reasons why. Where extensions are applied, ICT system extends by a further 20 working days and explanation letter/email is sent to resident.	
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	All letters contain contact details for the Ombudsman	
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>The customer receives a full written response (unless they have advised otherwise) once the outcome is known.</p> <p>As per 6.6 Resolution of outstanding actions in complaint response not tracked within complaint system but by Service Area.</p> <p>Stage two complaints – Our policy states:</p>	

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			<p><i>"We will write to you to tell you the outcome of the review at stage two of the complaints policy, including whether your complaint has been upheld and the reasons why. We will also tell you how we intend to put things right and whether there are any outstanding actions. As with a stage one complaint response the responding service area remain responsible for keeping customer up to date on any outstanding actions arising from the complaints."</i></p>	
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Each point is addressed individually in the Stage 2 conclusion letter with a clear and concise response, confirming any decisions or actions to be undertaken and with reference to any relevant policy, law and good practice procedures	
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition;	Yes	The stage 2 completion letter outlines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The stage of the complaint</li> <li>• Details of the complaint</li> <li>• The decisions made</li> <li>• The reasons for the decisions</li> </ul>	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	<p>c. the decision on the complaint;</p> <p>d. the reasons for any decisions made;</p> <p>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</p> <p>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</p> <p>g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of any remedy offered to put things right</li> <li>• Details of any outstanding actions</li> </ul> <p>Details of how to escalate to the Housing Ombudsman if they are not happy with the response</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	Stage 2 is our final response and is provided by a Manager with the authority to issue the response	

## 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>• Taking action if there has been 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	Where, after investigation, a complaint is upheld, either in part or in full, we will respond to the customer and acknowledge where we have gone wrong, what actions we have already taken and any further proposed resolutions.	
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Policy compliance and training provided to managers and complaint handling staff that cover remedies	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	The stage 1 and 2 letters set out what will happen with any remedies, and this will be followed through to completion. Any remedies will be discussed with the complainant if appropriate.	
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	Guidance from Housing Ombudsman is issued by HSET to appropriate Housing managers to consider as part of complaint responses	

## 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>a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.</li> <li>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;</li> <li>c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;</li> <li>d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;</li> </ul>	Yes/ongoing	<p>Annual complaints performance report to be developed to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Annual self-assessment is carried out and published on the website.</li> <li>b. Reports produced for Cabinet regarding complaints handling performance.</li> <li>c. Any findings of non-compliance with the Code by the HO</li> <li>d. Learning from complaints and service improvements as a result (to be developed)</li> <li>e. Any annual report about performance from the HO</li> <li>f. Any other relevant reports from the HO</li> </ul> <p>Data not available for refused complaints as this was not a requirement in the previous code. Software developments taking place to allow collection of this data going forward.</p>	<p><b>Complaint action plan 1</b> Routine annual work completed by September 2026</p> <p><b>Complaint action Plan 4</b></p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	<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>		Complaints report for 2025/26 published by end of September 2026 in line with HO target date	
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 section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes/ongoing	Complaints report for 2025/26 published by end of September 2026 in line with HO target date	<b>Complaint action plan 2</b> Routine annual work completed by September 2026
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes/ongoing	In the event of any future restructure or change of procedure a re-assessment against the Code and its requirements will be completed.	<b>Complaint action plan 3</b> Complete March 2026
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	If asked to review and update the self-assessment by the HO, we will	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	If we are unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, we will inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on our website We will provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.	

## 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	Oversight of complaints is provided by Housing Strategy and Engagement team to identify themes and trends in complaints handling and responses  Responding managers are required to identify learning from the complaints as part of ICT system response.	
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	Use of complaints information is used as part of Tenant Scrutiny and forms part of the Performance groups suite of indicators.  Learning from complaints is now recorded on each complaint outcome though further development needed.	
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	Yes	Information on the number of complaints received, our performance and learning outcomes is published.  Complaint information is utilised in Tenant Scrutiny and is part Tenant Performance Group quarterly	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.		reporting. Complaints performance is reported Strategic Housing Board and Housing Advisory Board	
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	Service Director – Housing identified in policy	
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	Cabinet Member for Housing Councillor is briefed in role and attended external training and seminars on the role.	
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight	Yes	Annual complaints report completed and published alongside self-assessment	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	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.		Complaints performance reported to Strategic Housing Board and Housing Advisory Board of which MRC is a member	
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: 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	Annual complaints report completed and published alongside self-assessment  Complaints performance reported to Strategic Housing Board and Housing Advisory Board of which MRC is part of	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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>a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</li> <li>b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and</li> <li>c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>Complaints policy is Chesterfield Borough Council wide with standard objectives for all to work positively to remedy and learn from issues where a fault has been identified</p> <p>Our complaints process is consistent with the principles set out in the CIH Professional Standards which match CBC's core principles</p>	