

## Chesterfield Borough Council's self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Code, June 2024

The self-assessment form should be reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body at least annually. During 2023/24, the self-assessment was approved by Cabinet. From 2024/25 onwards, annual self-assessments will be reported to the Housing Advisory Board.

Where paragraphs are **highlighted**, issues of **non-compliance** have been identified. A Compliance Action Plan (CAP) has been produced to show how we intend to return to full compliance with the Code, which has been published alongside this self-assessment form on the Council's website. References to 'CAP' in the self-assessment indicate that appropriate actions have been included in the Action Plan.

### 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	<a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a> The definition in our Complaints Policy is: <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>	No changes needed
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	No	<a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a> 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.	At present we do not have sufficiently robust processes to identify all expressions of dissatisfaction, and offer people

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	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.		councillors), and these will also be actioned in line with the Complaints Policy CBC has adopted the Housing Ombudsman definition of a complaint which does not require the word complaint to be used	the choice to make a complaint. <b>CAP6</b>
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.	Yes	<a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a> 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.	Compliant but will seek to formalise service request monitoring as part of policy and system review. <b>CAP12</b>
1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service	Yes	Service requests are still dealt with even if a complaint is raised.	As per 1.3: At present we do not have robust processes to make sure that all expressions of dissatisfaction are being logged

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	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.			as complaints. E.g. repair chasers, complaints received direct in teams rather than the Call Centre <b>CAP6</b>
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.	No	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	Dissatisfaction expressed through a survey is not currently defined as a complaint. Details about how to make a complaint are not currently provided when asking for wider feedback. A review of letters/surveys is underway to ensure clarity on complaints and feedback included. <b>CAP 7</b>

## 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	Complaint CAP13 (see also 8.1)
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>	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	<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></p> <p>Reasons for not accepting a complaint are clearly set out in the Complaints Policy and these will be explained to the customer if a complaint is not accepted</p>	<p>Although not detailed in the policy, discretion can be applied for accepting complaints outside the time limit. A policy update is planned to reflect this. <b>CAP3</b></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></p> <p>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>	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	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 a customer service officer and progressed on it 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.	No	Not confident that every member of staff is aware of the complaint process and what to do if they receive a complaint. The HO has stated in previous webinars that complaints need to be logged even if made verbally out on the estate.	Training and briefings being planned for staff on adoption and implementation of new complaints policy and system. <b>CAP8</b>
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	Complaint volumes and performance are discussed at Strategic Housing Board Complaints process is well-publicised and accessible.	

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.	No	<a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a> Details of the complaints policy, Ombudsman and Code are publicised, but methods not mentioned specifically in policy.	<b>CAP4</b> – will be amended on adoption of revised 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.	
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on	Yes	Letters throughout the complaints process contain contact details for	



Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.		the Housing Ombudsman and state they can contact the Housing Ombudsman at any time. Contact information for the Ombudsman is publicised on the website, newsletter 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 customer services team 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 complaints team have access to all staff at all levels. Complaints are administered by the complaints 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	No	Training needs have been identified for staff. Introduction of complaints as standardised item on management meeting agendas	<b>CAP15</b> Appointment of two customer care officers. All staff training on new policy and processes to be carried out.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints 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	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	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.	No	The Complaints Policy states: <i>We will acknowledge your complaint within five working days, either by telephone, or in writing. We will set out our understanding about your complaint and the outcomes you are seeking.</i>	If the reason for the complaint is unclear or if further information is needed, the customer is contacted to discuss this. This is detailed in the acknowledgment. Currently, understanding of the complaint is not set out at the acknowledgment stage The outcomes the individual is seeking are not set out as these are not asked Changes to standard forms, letters and procedures are planned. <b>CAP10</b> – Introduction of new policy and process will include introducing this requirement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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.	No	None	As above - does not happen at the moment as complaints are not 'defined' at the acknowledgment stage. Changes are planned (see 5.6) <b>CAP11</b>
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: <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	Complaint handlers aim to deal with complaints in line with a,b,c, and d at 5.8 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 more senior member of staff not connected to the original investigation. 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	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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.	No	None	Where responses fall outside of timescale tenants are not kept informed as a matter of routine. Extra resources are planned to improve communication to residents. <b>CAP16</b>
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	Reasonable adjustments will be made to reflect the needs of the individual customer, as required. These are recorded on the Housing Management System.	Reasonable adjustment to be included in revised complaints system
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	Yes	<a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a> The reasons for not escalating a complaint are outlined in the 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	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.		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	<p>A full record of each complaint is retained and includes:</p> <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</li> </ul> <p>(These are held on the complaints system)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of the investigation</li> <li>• Details of any actions taken/outstanding actions</li> <li>• Supporting documentation</li> </ul> <p>(These are held locally by the Service Area)</p>	
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	Complaints can be remedied at any stage of the complaints process for resolution. Possible need to explore other options for preventing escalation	



Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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.	No	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. Unable to determine whether vulnerability is considered in response times.	<b>CAP9</b> Processes not currently in place where cases can be 'triaged' or vulnerability factored into speed of response.
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <b><u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u></b>	No	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 not currently defined at this stage see 5.6	<b>CAP11</b> Change in policy and system to be approved in July 2024
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints	No	<a href="#">Link to complaints policy webpage</a> The Complaints policy states: <i>We will aim to resolve your complaint within ten working days</i>	<b>CAP5</b> Policy and complaints ICT system also being updated to correspond to new timescales

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	<p><u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.</p>		<p>This timeframe is conveyed to the customer in the acknowledgment letter and/or the acknowledgement email.</p> <p>Average Stage 1 response time for 2023/24 was 29 days. This has improved to 13 days for Apr/May 2024</p>	
6.4	<p>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.</p>	No	<p>The Complaints Policy states:  <i>If the complaint can't be completed within this time, then we will let you know and explain the reasons why.</i></p> <p>This will not usually be more than 10 working days.</p> <p>Where extensions are applied, ICT system extends by a further 10 working days and explanation letter/email is sent to resident.</p> <p>In 2023/24 where extensions were applied 33.3% were responded to on time</p>	CAP17

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	All complaints letters contain the contact details for the Ombudsman including the extension letters	
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	The customer receives a written response (unless they have advised otherwise) once the outcome is known. 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.	
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.	No		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. This cannot be currently claimed for all responses especially in

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
				relation to repairs. Quality of communication will be addressed by additional resources planned for HPS team <b>CAP18</b>
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	
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the complaint stage;</li> <li>b. the complaint definition;</li> <li>c. the decision on the complaint;</li> </ul>	Yes	The stage 1 completion letter outlines <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> </ul>	See 6.7

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	<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 stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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	Yes	Requests for a stage 2 escalation are acknowledged, defined and logged within 5 working days of the request being received.	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	days of the escalation request being received.			
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, 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. If the complainant does not give a reason their complaint is still escalated to a Manager to investigate at Stage 2	
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 a senior member of staff. 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	The Stage 2 complaint will usually be dealt with within 20 working days. Whilst performance during 2023/24 fell well below this requirements at 48 days since the new code was launched this has improved to 14 days Apr/May 2024	
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the	No	Only three stage 2 complaints had extensions applied in 2023/24 and all went over timescale.	<b>CAP17</b> Extensions not currently utilised effectively

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	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.			
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>	
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant	Yes	Each point is addressed individually in the Stage 2 conclusion letter with a clear and concise response, confirming any decisions or actions	



Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	policy, law and good practice where appropriate.		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; 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	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> <li>• Details of any remedy offered to put things right</li> <li>• Details of any outstanding actions</li> </ul> Details of how to escalate to the Housing Ombudsman if they are not happy with the response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
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 issued 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.	No	None	<b>CAP 22</b> Can't evidence this either way across the whole service – The HO's advice on remedies needs to be adopted

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
				Proposed remedies will be reasonable, consider the detrimental impact on the customer, be fair and proportionate, without detriment to other residents/ customers.
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.	No	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. Timescales routinely omitted from repair responses -	<b>CAP23</b> - not able to demonstrate universally done
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	No	None	<b>CAP22</b> Not routinely done - needs to be adopted

## 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	<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>CAP1</b> <b>CAP13</b> <b>CAP14</b></p> <p>The Housing Strategy and Engagement Team within Housing use the system to produce reports made available to the Council's governing body.</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>		<p>Annual complaints report for 2023/24 prepared and response from board published on website June 2024</p> <p><a href="#">Weblink</a></p>	
8.2	<p>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.</p>	Yes	<p>A report to comply with the 2022 code was sent to Cabinet in Feb 2024 detailing performance over Q1-Q3 2023/24. No formal response from Cabinet 'report noted'.</p> <p>Annual complaints report for 2023/24 prepared and response from board published on website June 2024</p> <p><a href="#">weblink</a></p>	<b>CAP2</b>
8.3	<p>Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.</p>	Yes	<p>In the event of any future restructure or change of procedure a re-assessment against the Code and its requirements will be completed.</p> <p>Revised self-assessment to be produced once Policy amendments made</p>	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	
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	Response to Ombudsman maladministration on Communal cleaning review praised by Housing Ombudsman External instruction to review service and make improvements followed. Updates being made to complaints system to allow easier recording and learning from complaints	
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.	No	Whilst use of complaints information is used as part of Tenant Scrutiny forms part of the Performance groups suite of indicators, no sustained process for ensuring learning from complaints is part of manager behaviours. Poor performance in complaint handling 45%	<b>CAP19</b> – training on importance of complaint handling and timescales is required Introduction of standardised management meeting item on complaints will identify positive changes and outputs moving forward
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	First report went to Cabinet Feb 2024 Reporting to Tenants Performance Group began Feb 2024 Discussions taking place about oversight in housing. Information on the number of complaints received, our performance and learning outcomes	

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.		is published in our annual report to tenants. Complaint information is utilised in Tenant Scrutiny and will form part of the newly established Tenant Performance Group reporting. Complaints performance is reported monthly to Strategic Housing 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.	No	No confirmed lead within service	<b>CAP20</b> Lead needs to be identified and confirmed
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 Innes briefed on role	



Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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.	No	<p>Reporting has been done but not a regular discussion and format with the MRC. Cabinet Report February 2024 detailing performance for first three quarter of 2023/24.</p> <p>Annual complaints report completed and published alongside self-assessment</p> <p>Complaints performance reported to Strategic Housing Board</p>	CAP21 – mechanism to provide regular update to MRC has been developed and will launch has part of Housing Advisory Board in October 2024
9.7	<p>As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;</li> <li>b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;</li> <li>c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress</li> </ul>	No	<p>Reporting has been done but not a regular discussion and format with the MRC. Cabinet Report February 2024 detailing performance for first three quarter of 2023/24.</p> <p>Annual complaints report completed and published alongside self-assessment</p> <p>Complaints performance reported to Strategic Housing Board</p>	CAP21 – mechanism to provide regular update to MRC has been developed and will launch has part of Housing Advisory Board in October 2024

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.			
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	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  Our complaints process is consistent with the principles set out in the CIH Professional Standards which match CBC's core principles	