

Appendix B – Self-Assessment Form

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and discussed at the landlord’s governing body annually.

Evidence should be included to support all statements with additional commentary as necessary.

Explanations must also be provided where a mandatory ‘must’ requirement is not met to set out the rationale for the alternative approach adopted and why this delivers a better outcome.

Section 1 - Definition of a complaint

Mandatory ‘must’ requirements

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
|--------------|--|----------------|---|
| 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 organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.</i> | Yes | This is the definition of a complaint contained within our complaints policy |
| 1.3 | The resident does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must still be handled in line with the landlord’s complaints policy. | Yes | As per above, the complaint can be made in any way by any person. |
| 1.6 | ... if further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter, or if the resident requests it, the issue must be logged as a complaint. | Yes | If we have been unable to resolve a customer’s dissatisfaction or they request to make a formal complaint - this is raised, to ‘Make Things Right’ Stage 1 of our 2 Stage complaints pr |

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| 1.7 | A landlord must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. | | If we have been unable to resolve a customer's dissatisfaction or they request to make a formal complaint - this is raised, to 'Make Things Right' Stage 1 of our 2 Stage complaints pr |
| 1.8 | A complaints policy must clearly set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered, and these circumstances should be fair and reasonable to residents. | Yes | <p>Evidence relied upon: We will not investigate a complaint under the following circumstances:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A request for service, action or information • A report of antisocial behaviour -Noise Nuisance, Dog Fouling, Parking, or any issue with neighbours (Unless the issue relates to how we have managed it) • Matters that have previously been investigated and resolved under our complaint's procedure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the complaint is about an incident over 6 months old • Matters that are, or have been, the subject of legal proceedings. • A query about a policy (unless the issue relates to failure to comply with the policy) • Concerns about the level of rent/service charge or the amount of the rent/service charge increase (depending on whether a rent/tenancy is secure/affordable/social. <p>Complaint and Compliments Procedure Date Approved: July 2021 Expiry Date: July 2024 customers can appeal to the government about their level of rent or service charge; customers can contact their housing officer in the first instance for information)</p> |

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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns from leaseholders and shared owners about the reasonableness or increase of service charges. These customers may be able to appeal to the First-Tier Tribunal see: http://www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/residential-property#leasehold or for advice is available from the Leasehold Advisory Service at https://www.lease-advice.org/. • Issues being pursued in an unreasonable manner • Issues the Ombudsman has already decided upon <p>Under any of these circumstances we provide a full explanation to our customers so that they understand the routes they need to progress.</p> |
| 1.9 | If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. | | As per above. |

Best practice 'should' requirements

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
|--------------|---|----------------|---|
| 1.4 | Landlords should recognise 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. | Yes | This is detailed in our Complaints Policy & Procedure Our approach to complaint management is local resolution of complaints as soon as possible with a focus on putting things right. |
| 1.5 | Survey feedback may not necessarily need to be treated as a complaint, though, where possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue their dissatisfaction as a complaint if they wish to. | Yes | If we are aware of the complaint then we will act to resolve as soon as possible. |

Section 2 - Accessibility and awareness

Mandatory 'must' requirements

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
|--------------|---|----------------|--|
| 2.1 | Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which residents can make a complaint such as in person, over the telephone, in writing, by email and digitally. While the Ombudsman recognises that it may not be feasible for a landlord to use all of the potential channels, there must be more than one route of access into the complaints system. | Yes | We will accept complaints regardless of how they are made. This could be over the phone, in writing, by email, digitally or in person |

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| 2.3 | Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the number of stages involved, what will happen at each stage and the timeframes for responding. | Yes | Our complaints Policy & Procedure are available on our website |
| 2.4 | Landlord websites, if they exist, must include information on how to raise a complaint. The complaints policy and process must be easy to find on the website. | Yes | Our complaints Policy & Procedure are available on our website There is an “I WANT TO “ section on the website which allows complaints to submit an on line form |
| 2.5 | Landlords must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and may need to adapt normal policies, procedures, or processes to accommodate an individual’s needs. Landlords must satisfy themselves that their policy sets out how they will respond to reasonable adjustments requests in line with the Equality Act and that complaints handlers have had appropriate training to deal with such requests. | Yes | All staff receive annual training on the Equality Act and how to follow the guidelines in all aspects of their role. |
| 2.6 | Landlords must publicise the complaints policy and process, the Complaint Handling Code and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme in leaflets, posters, newsletters, online and as part of regular correspondence with residents. | Yes | We have published an article in our e-zine during the course of the last year. Feb 2023 https://www.teignhousing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Teign-Housing-Feb-2023.pdf October 2022 https://www.teignhousing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Teign-Housing-October-2022-Ezine.pdf May 2022 https://www.teignhousing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Teign-Housing-May-2022.pdf |

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| 2.7 | Landlords must provide residents with contact information for the Ombudsman as part of its regular correspondence with residents. | No | None issued this year, however we do include Ombudsman's details throughout the complaints process. The Ombudsman's details are available on our website https://www.teighousing.co.uk/i-want-to/make-a-complaint/ |
| 2.8 | Landlords must provide early advice to residents regarding their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service throughout their complaint, not only when the landlord's complaints process is exhausted. | Yes | We include Ombudsman's details throughout the complaints process. The Ombudsman's details are available on our website https://www.teighousing.co.uk/i-want-to/make-a-complaint/ |

Best practice 'should' requirements

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
|--------------|--|----------------|---|
| 2.2 | Where a landlord has set up channels to communicate with its residents via social media, then it should expect to receive complaints via those channels. Policies should contain details of the steps that will be taken when a complaint is received via social media and how confidentiality and privacy will be maintained. | No | Our policies do not state how we would address this. Frequencies have been low to date and each case has been dealt with individually as and when they arise. |

Section 3 - Complaint handling personnel

Mandatory 'must' requirements

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
|--------------|---|----------------|---|
| 3.1 | Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling to ensure complaints receive the necessary attention, and that these are reported to the governing body. This Code will refer to that person or team as the "complaints officer". | Yes | We have a Resolutions Manager |
| 3.2 | ...the complaint handler appointed must have appropriate complaint handling skills and no conflicts of interest. | Yes | We provide regular training opportunities to ensure that our Resolution Managers skills remain current. |

Best practice 'should' requirements

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
|--------------|---|----------------|--|
| 3.3 | Complaint handlers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be able to act sensitively and fairly • be trained to handle complaints and deal with distressed and upset residents • have access to staff at all levels to facilitate quick resolution of complaints • have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes quickly and fairly. | Yes | This is within our job descriptions and the person specification for the Resolutions Manager |

Section 4 - Complaint handling principles

Mandatory 'must' requirements

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
|--------------|--|----------------|--|
| 4.1 | Any decision to try and resolve a concern must be taken in agreement with the resident and a landlord's audit trail/records should be able to demonstrate this. Landlords must ensure that efforts to resolve a resident's concerns do not obstruct access to the complaints procedure or result in any unreasonable delay. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'pre-complaint stage') as this causes unnecessary confusion for residents. When a complaint is made, it must be acknowledged and logged at stage one of the complaints procedure within five days of receipt . | Yes | This is detailed within our complaints policy and procedure. |
| 4.2 | Within the complaint acknowledgement, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties. | Yes | This is detailed within our complaints policy and procedure. |
| 4.6 | A complaint investigation must be conducted in an impartial manner. | Yes | |
| 4.7 | The complaint handler must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deal with complaints on their merits • act independently and have an open mind • take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest • consider all information and evidence carefully | Yes | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> keep the complaint confidential as far as possible, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter. | | |
| 4.11 | Landlords must adhere to any reasonable arrangements agreed with residents in terms of frequency and method of communication | Yes | |
| 4.12 | <p>The resident, and if applicable any staff member who is the subject of the complaint, must also be given a fair chance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> set out their position comment on any adverse findings before a final decision is made. | Yes | |
| 4.13 | A landlord must include in its complaints policy its timescales for a resident to request escalation of a complaint | Yes | This is also reiterated within the complaints correspondence with the resident |
| 4.14 | A landlord must not unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure and must have clear and valid reasons for taking that course of action. Reasons for declining to escalate a complaint must be clearly set out in a landlord's complaints policy and must be the same as the reasons for not accepting a complaint. | Yes | |
| 4.15 | A full record must be kept of the complaint, any review 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 reports or surveys prepared. | Yes | Records are maintained by the Resolutions Manager |
| 4.18 | Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives when pursuing a complaint. | Yes | This is covered by our contact management policy |

Best practice 'should' requirements

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
|--------------|--|----------------|---|
| 4.3 | Landlords should manage residents' expectations from the outset, being clear where a desired outcome is unreasonable or unrealistic | Yes | We discuss expectations with the resident throughout the complaints process |
| 4.4 | A complaint should be resolved at the earliest possible opportunity, having assessed what evidence is needed to fully consider the issues, what outcome would resolve the matter for the resident and whether there are any urgent actions required. | Yes | Our policy states : Our approach to complaint management is local resolution of complaints as soon as possible with a focus on putting things right. |
| 4.5 | Landlords should 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 where this is reasonable. | Yes | |
| 4.8 | Where a key issue of a complaint relates to the parties' legal obligations landlords should clearly set out their understanding of the obligations of both parties. | yes | |
| 4.9 | Communication with the resident should not generally identify individual members of staff or contractors. | No | Although we try not to mention names, sometimes this is unavoidable |
| 4.10 | Landlords should keep residents regularly updated about the progress of the investigation. | Yes | We communicate regularly |
| 4.16 | Landlords should seek feedback from residents in relation to the landlord's complaint handling as part of the drive to encourage a positive complaint and learning culture. | Yes | We issue a satisfaction survey asking how satisfied the resident was with the way we handled their complaint |
| 4.17 | Landlords should recognise the impact that being complained about can have on future service delivery. Landlords should ensure that staff are supported and engaged in the complaints process, including the learning that can be gained | Yes | |

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| 4.19 | Any restrictions placed on a resident's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be appropriate to their needs and should demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. | Yes | This would follow the guidance within our contact management policy. |
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Section 5 - Complaint stages

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Stage 1

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
|--------------|---|----------------|---|
| 5.1 | Landlords must respond to the complaint <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being logged. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason. | Y | As detailed within our procedure |
| 5.5 | A complaint response must be sent 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 expeditiously with regular updates provided to the resident. | Y | As detailed within our procedure |
| 5.6 | Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate. | Y | As detailed within our procedure |
| 5.8 | Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage one in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complaint stage • the decision on the complaint • the reasons for any decisions made • the details of any remedy offered to put things right • details of any outstanding actions • details of how to escalate the matter to stage two if the resident is not satisfied with the answer | Y | As detailed within our procedure |

Stage 2

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
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| 5.9 | If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage one it must be progressed to stage two of the landlord's procedure, unless an exclusion ground now applies. In instances where a landlord declines to escalate a complaint it must clearly communicate in writing its reasons for not escalating as well as the resident's right to approach the Ombudsman about its decision. | Y | As detailed within our procedure |
| 5.10 | On receipt of the escalation request, landlords must set out their understanding of issues outstanding and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties. | Y | As detailed within our procedure |
| 5.11 | Landlords must only escalate a complaint to stage two once it has completed stage one and at the request of the resident. | Y | As detailed within our procedure |
| 5.12 | The person considering the complaint at stage two, must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage one. | | Our procedure states that stage 2 will be carried out by a senior manager who may be from a different department. Wherever possible we aim for this to always be from a separate department in order to provide different perspective. |
| 5.13 | Landlords must respond to the stage two complaint <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being escalated. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason. | Y | As detailed within our procedure |
| 5.16 | Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage two in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complaint stage • the complaint definition • the decision on the complaint • the reasons for any decisions made | Y | We always include details of how to refer the case onto the Ombudsman |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the details of any remedy offered to put things right details of any outstanding actions <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> if the landlord has a third stage, details of how to escalate the matter to stage three if this was the final stage, details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied. | | |
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Stage 3

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
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| 5.17 | Two stage landlord complaint procedures are ideal. This ensures that the complaint process is not unduly long. If landlords strongly believe a third stage is necessary, they must set out their reasons for this as part of their self-assessment. A process with more than three stages is not acceptable under any circumstances. | Yes | We have a two-stage formal process |
| 5.20 | Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage three in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the complaint stage the complaint definition the decision on the complaint the reasons for any decisions made the details of any remedy offered to put things right details of any outstanding actions details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied | N/A | We have a two-stage formal process We always include details of how to refer the case onto the Ombudsman if the resident wishes to escalate the case further |

Best practice 'should' requirements

Stage 1

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
|--------------|--|----------------|---|
| 5.2 | If an extension beyond 20 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties. | Yes | We would seek permission to extend and keep a record of the agreement |
| 5.3 | Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response. | Yes | Although we have not experienced this situation this would be our approach |
| 5.4 | Where the problem is a recurring issue, the landlord should consider any older reports as part of the background to the complaint if this will help to resolve the issue for the resident. | Yes | The Resolutions Manager would bring this to the attention of the investigating manager |
| 5.7 | Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these should be incorporated into the stage one response if they are relevant, and the stage one response has not been issued. Where the stage one response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the complaint should be logged as a new complaint. | Yes | We would include any additional information whilst the case was open. Alternatively, we would advise the resident that we would need to investigate separately. |

Stage 2

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
|--------------|---|----------------|---|
| 5.14 | If an extension beyond 10 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties. | Yes | We would seek permission to extend and keep a record of the agreement |

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| 5.15 | Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response | yes | Although we have not experienced this situation this would be our approach |
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Stage 3

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
|--------------|--|----------------|---|
| 5.18 | Complaints should only go to a third stage if the resident has actively requested a third stage review of their complaint. Where a third stage is in place and has been requested, landlords must respond to the stage three complaint <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being escalated. Additional time will only be justified if related to convening a panel. An explanation and a date for when the stage three response will be received should be provided to the resident. | N/A | |
| 5.19 | Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response. | N/A | |

Section 6 - Putting things right

Mandatory 'must' requirements

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
|--------------|--|----------------|--|
| 6.1 | Effective dispute resolution requires a process designed to resolve complaints. 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. | Yes | Our policy states We aim to make our homes and services adaptable to changing customer needs and aspirations, continuously improving customer service and ultimately customer satisfaction. We acknowledge that at times, we can get things wrong. If we do, we need to know so that we can 'Make things Right 'and avoid the problem in the future. Complaints and Compliments are important. They are the voice of our Tenant and tell us how they feel about the services that we offer. |
| 6.2 | Any remedy offered must reflect the extent of any service failures and the level of detriment caused to the resident as a result. A landlord must carefully manage the expectations of residents and not promise anything that cannot be delivered or would cause unfairness to other residents. | Yes | Our policy states Our approach to complaint management is local resolution of complaints as soon as possible with a focus on putting things right. |
| 6.5 | 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 | This would be detailed in our responses along with an explanation of our rationale |
| 6.6 | In awarding compensation, a landlord must consider whether any statutory payments are due, if any quantifiable losses have been incurred, the time and trouble a resident has been put to as well as any distress and inconvenience caused. | Yes | We have agreed a new compensation policy and procedure which clearly sets out the difference between statutory and discretionary payments |

Best practice 'should' requirements

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
|--------------|--|-------------------|---|
| 6.3 | Landlords should look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether anything needs to be 'put right' in terms of process or systems to the benefit of all residents. | Yes | Our procedure states The aim of the complaints process is to use clear communication to resolve complaints as quickly as possible and learn from our mistakes, so they are not repeated. |
| 6.7 | In some cases, a resident may have a legal entitlement to redress. The landlord should still offer a resolution where possible, obtaining legal advice as to how any offer of resolution should be worded. | Yes | |

Section 7 - Continuous learning and improvement

Mandatory 'must' requirements

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
|--------------|--|----------------|--|
| 7.2 | Accountability and transparency are integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints in their annual report and more frequently to their residents, staff and scrutiny panels. | Yes | Information is included in our annual report |

Best practice 'should' requirements

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
|--------------|---|----------------|---|
| 7.3 | A member of the governing body should be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This role will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight to the governing body on the landlord's complaint handling performance. | Yes | We have a board member appointed to champion complaints and review our complaints process |
| 7.4 | As a minimum, governing bodies should receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular updates on the volume, categories and outcome of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance including compliance with the Ombudsman's orders • Regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling, • The annual performance report produced by the Ombudsman, where applicable • Individual complaint outcomes where necessary, including where the Ombudsman made findings of severe maladministration or referrals to regulatory bodies. The implementation of management responses should be tracked to ensure they are delivered to agreed timescales. The annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code for scrutiny and challenge. | yes | Our Board receive quarterly updates. |

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| 7.5 | Any themes or trends should be assessed by senior management to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks or policies and procedures that require revision. They should also be used to inform staff and contractor training. | Yes | We report on trends identifying business areas and behaviours to form part of our lessons learnt approach. |
| 7.6 | <p>Landlords should have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all employees that reflects the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments • take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints rather than blaming others • act within the Professional Standards for engaging with complaints as set by the Chartered Institute of Housing. | | |

Section 8 - Self-assessment and compliance

Mandatory 'must' requirements

| Code section | Code requirement | Comply: Yes/No | Evidence, commentary and any explanations |
|--------------|---|----------------|--|
| 8.1 | Landlords must carry out an annual self-assessment against the Code to ensure their complaint handling remains in line with its requirements. | Yes | |
| 8.2 | Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure and/or change in procedures. | Yes | We restructured in December 2022; this self-assessment was delayed slightly to allow for the embedding of the complaints process with a new complaints team. |
| 8.3 | Following each self-assessment, a landlord must: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• report the outcome of their self-assessment to their governing body. In the case of local authorities, self-assessment outcomes should be reported to elected members• publish the outcome of their assessment on their website if they have one, or otherwise make accessible to residents• include the self-assessment in their annual report section on complaints handling performance | Yes | This self-assessment will be published on our website, submitted to or Board for review along with submission to our CHATT (Complaint Handling At Teign and Templar) group, a group of residents who review our complaints process |