

Appendix A: Southern Housing Complaints Self Assessment on the Housing Ombudsman Code

Housing Ombudsman guidance: Self-assessment form


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

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

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

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

Section 1: Definition of a complaint




Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: ‘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.’	Yes	Snapshot from Complaints Policy: 2.1 - We’ve adopted the Housing Ombudsman’s definition of a complaint as: ‘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.	 Complaints Policy 2.1	We have adopted the Housing Ombudsman’s definition of a Complaint and a service request in our Complaints Policy.




Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>3.1 - Anyone can make a complaint about the services we, or anyone working for us (e.g. contractors), provide. However, you may only be able to escalate your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service if you have a landlord/tenant relationship with us. This includes leaseholders and other residents with agreements to occupy premises with a member landlord/managing agent.</p> <p>3.2 - If you prefer, you can authorise someone else to make a complaint on your behalf i.e., an 'advocate'. This could be a friend/relative or representative from an external organisation (such as Citizens Advice). If you'd like an advocate to act on your behalf, or represent or accompany you at any meetings with us, let us know.</p>	<p>Complaints Policy 2.4, 3.2</p> <p>Putting It Right Leaflet</p> <p>Complaint Handling Code P14 - Service request V's complaint flow charts</p>	Our Complaints Policy (section 2.4 and 3.2) and 'Putting It Right' leaflet detail how we'll deal with a resident's expression of dissatisfaction. Any enquiry fitting the definition of a complaint will be raised and handled as such. We accept complaints via third parties.
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	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>2.4 - The Housing Ombudsman Service defines a service request as 'a request from a resident to their landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right'. When you first let us know about your concern, as a starting point we'll ask you what you'd like us to do to put things right. We can often resolve service requests, such as a missed appointment or repair delay, immediately with an apology and by providing another appointment. We may be able to resolve this outside of our complaints process, recording it as a service request and monitoring it to completion. If we need to make further enquiries to resolve the matter, you're dissatisfied, or if you ask us to at any point, we'll log it as a complaint. We'll continue to address any service requests after we've logged a complaint...</p>	<p>Complaints Policy 2.4</p> <p>Complaint Handling Code P14 - Service request V's complaint flow charts</p>	This is set out in section 2.4 of our Complaints Policy, and on our website. Service requests are monitored. Procedures are in place to guide staff how to apply the Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	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>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>2.4 - ...If we need to make further enquiries to resolve the matter, you're dissatisfied, or if you ask us to at any point, we'll log it as a complaint. We'll continue to address any service requests after we've logged a complaint.</p>	<p>Complaints Policy 2.4</p> <p>Putting It Right Leaflet</p>	This is set out in section 2.4 of our Complaints Policy, and on our website. Service requests are monitored. Procedures are in place to guide staff how to apply the Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024.
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>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>5.1 - There are a range of ways you can raise a complaint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our website • Online customer portal • Live chat • Phone • Letter/email • In person • Via social media, where Southern Housing has a profile. <p>If you need help in raising a complaint in another way, just let us know.</p>	<p>Complaints Policy 5.0</p>	<p>Surveys are not listed in our range of ways residents can raise a complaint. Our Survey Team make residents aware that they can make a separate complaint and will support them to do so.</p> <p>Our online satisfaction surveys explain how residents feedback will be used, and we provide a link to our complaints website page to enable residents to make a complaint.</p>






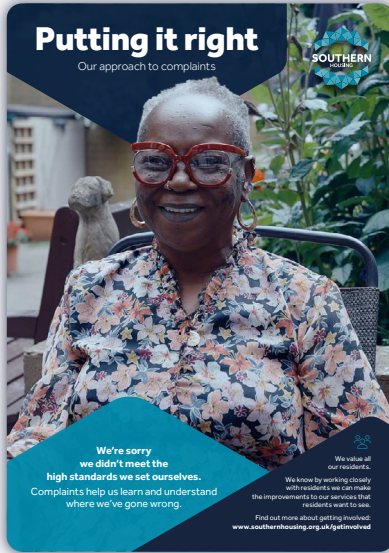
Section 2: Exclusions

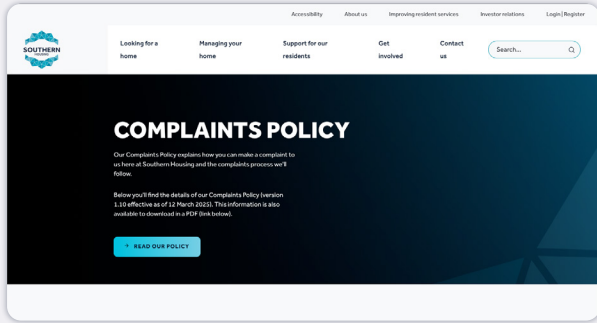
Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>4.6 - We'll consider the individual circumstances of each complaint. If we decide not to accept a complaint, we'll provide an explanation setting out the reason why. If you're unhappy with our decision, you're able to approach the Housing Ombudsman Service for advice.</p>	<p> Complaints Policy 4.5, 4.6</p> <p> Our Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints ensures that the requirements of the code are monitored and met. Section 7</p>	This is set out in section 2.4 of our Complaints Policy, and on our website. Service requests are monitored. Procedures are in place to guide staff how to apply the Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024.
2.2	<p>A Complaints Policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📌 The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over 12 months ago 📌 Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court 📌 Matters that have previously been considered under the Complaints Policy. 	Yes	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>4.1 - You can complain about our standard of service, actions or lack of action by us or anyone working for us (e.g. contractors) within 12 months of the issue happening or of you becoming aware of the issue. We may use our discretion to accept older complaints if there's good reason you hadn't raised it before.</p> <p>4.2 - If the problem is a reoccurring or ongoing issue, we'll consider any older reports as background to the investigation.</p> <p>4.3 - If you make a complaint and we complete our process, we're unlikely to accept another complaint about the same issue unless you provide new information. If you're unhappy with our decision, please see section 8, which explains other options.</p> <p>4.4 - We won't accept new complaints that have already been investigated or are under investigation by the Housing Ombudsman Service.</p> <p>4.5 - There may be some circumstances where your complaint is better dealt with outside our complaints process. If this is the case, we'll provide an explanation setting out why and the action you can take. You'll be able to approach the Housing Ombudsman Service once you've received our decision.</p>	<p> Complaints Policy 4.5, 7.7</p>	Our Complaints Policy (section 4.5 and 7.7) highlights the circumstances where we might not accept a complaint or escalation. Where we don't accept a complaint, we'll explain why and give advice and support to residents to help resolve the matter.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	Yes	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>4.1 - You can complain about our standard of service, actions or lack of action by us or anyone working for us (e.g. contractors) within 12 months of the issue happening or of you becoming aware of the issue. We may use our discretion to accept older complaints if there's good reason you hadn't raised it before.</p>	 Complaints Policy 4.1	Our Complaints Policy (section 4.1) says that we accept complaints within 12 months of the issue, or residents becoming aware of the issue. There is some discretion in our policy so we will consider each situation individually and reasonably.
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.	Yes	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>4.5 - There may be some circumstances where your complaint is better dealt with outside our complaints process. If this is the case, we'll provide an explanation setting out why and the action you can take. You'll be able to approach the Housing Ombudsman Service once you've received our decision.</p> <p>4.6 - We'll consider the individual circumstances of each complaint. If we decide not to accept a complaint, we'll provide an explanation setting out the reason why. If you're unhappy with our decision, you're able to approach the Housing Ombudsman Service for advice.</p>	 Complaints Policy 4.5, 4.6	<p>If we refuse to accept a complaint, the reasoning, evidence, and details of how to take that decision to the Ombudsman is included in written communication with the resident.</p> <p>Our standard letters are endorsed by our Resident Communication and Complaints panels.</p>
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>4.6 - We'll consider the individual circumstances of each complaint. If we decide not to accept a complaint, we'll provide an explanation setting out the reason why. If you're unhappy with our decision, you're able to approach the Housing Ombudsman Service for advice.</p>	 Complaints Policy 4.6	All complaints are considered on the individual circumstances of each case. Refusals are made in line with our Complaints Policy.

Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>5.1 - There are a range of ways you can raise a complaint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our website • Online customer portal • Live chat • Phone • Letter/email • In person • Via social media, where Southern Housing has a profile. <p>If you need help in raising a complaint in another way, just let us know.</p>	<p> Complaints Policy 5.0, 5.3</p> <p> Reasonable Adjustments and Vulnerable Needs Policy 2.6</p> <p> Putting It Right Leaflet</p>	<p>Complaints are accepted in many ways. For example, our website, online customer portals, live chat, phone, letter, email, in person or via our social media profiles.</p> <p>In our complaint policy, (sections 5.0 - 5.3) we commit to taking individual preferences into account for residents who need to access the complaints process, and when communicating with us, in line with our Reasonable Adjustments and Vulnerable Needs Policy and the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Our complaint handlers are trained on reasonable adjustments and vulnerable needs. Our technology systems prompt complaint handlers to find out the needs and circumstances that we need to consider. Complaint handlers note the information on our technology systems.</p> <p>We're planning to improve access through our website. Our new contact centre technology system was in place from late 2024. Residents helped to design the requirements of the system. In June 2025 we launched a single email and phone number to make it easier for residents to contact us.</p>



Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>5.1 - There are a range of ways you can raise a complaint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our website • Online customer portal • Live chat • Phone • Letter/email • In person • Via social media, where Southern Housing has a profile. <p>If you need help in raising a complaint in another way, just let us know.</p>	Complaints Policy 5.1	<p>Complaints are accepted in many ways. For example, via our website, online customer portals, live chat, phone, letter, email, in person or our social media profiles. We accept complaints to all colleagues.</p> <p>All colleagues are made aware of the Complaints Policy, procedure and process for raising a complaint.</p> <p>We make contractors (and subcontractors) aware through our "Putting It Right: A Contractor's Guide" guidance.</p>
3.3	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>Snapshot of Putting It Right Leaflet (front):</p> 	Complaints Webpage Putting It Right Leaflet Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report	<p>From April 2024 to March 2025, we received 8116 stage 1 complaints. Our Complaints Policy and Putting It Right Leaflet is available on our website shows residents how to make a complaint.</p> <p>We review access to complaints for various diverse groups.</p> <p>We publicise what we are doing to address complaints and service failings through our Hearts and Minds campaign.</p> <p>Complaints performance and service is publicised through our annual Residents Review.</p>




Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	Snapshot of Complaints Webpage: 	Complaints Webpage Putting It Right Leaflet Complaints Policy	Our resident approved Complaints Policy outlines our two-stage process, with details of each stage. It's printed, translated, or provided in large print, when required by residents. Our leaflet 'Putting It Right' provides a simple explanation of the complaints process. This leaflet has been reviewed and updated by our Resident Communications and Complaints panels to ensure it's clear and easy to understand.
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	Snapshot from Complaints Policy: 1.9 - We'll publish this Policy, and information about the Housing Ombudsman and their Complaint Handling Code: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On our website • Easy-to-read leaflet • In our resident magazine. 	Complaints Policy 1.9 Putting It Right Leaflet	Section 1.9 of our Complaints Policy details that this information is on our website and in our 'Putting It Right' leaflet.
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	Snapshot from Complaints Policy: 3.2 - If you prefer, you can authorise someone else to make a complaint on your behalf i.e., an 'advocate'. This could be a friend/relative or representative from an external organisation (such as Citizens Advice). If you'd like an advocate to act on your behalf, or represent or accompany you at any meetings with us, let us know.	Complaints Policy 3.2 Reasonable Adjustments and Vulnerable Needs Policy 2.6	We accept and progress complaints via third parties as detailed in our Complaints Policy. In line with our Reasonable Adjustments and Vulnerable Needs Policy and Complaints Policy, we ask if residents wish to be represented, or accompanied, throughout their complaint. We confirm arrangements to residents in the complaint.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>8.1 - You're able to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any point throughout your complaint for advice. Once you've exhausted our complaints process at stage two, you may ask the Housing Ombudsman Service to mediate or investigate the case on your behalf.</p> <p>8.2 - The Housing Ombudsman Service may not consider complaints that fall within the jurisdiction of another:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ombudsman • Complaints-handling body (such as the Information Commissioner) • Regulator (such as the Regulator of Social Housing or Building Safety Regulator) • Property Redress Scheme. • Appropriate referral will depend on the specific complaint. We, or the Ombudsman, will signpost you to the relevant body as appropriate. <p>8.3 - You can find Housing Ombudsman Service contact details below, on our website, or at housing-ombudsman.org.uk.</p>	<p>Putting It Right Leaflet</p> <p>Complaints Policy</p> <p>8.0</p>	The complaints page on our website, Complaints Policy, and Putting It Right Leaflet, all provide information for residents about how to access the Housing Ombudsman Service during the complaints process. We include details of the Housing Ombudsman Service, and residents' right to seek their help in our standard letters.








Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	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	<p>Snapshot from Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints Policy:</p> <p>2.2 - We have a dedicated Complaints Resolution team responsible for coordinating and handling complaints, liaising with the Housing Ombudsman service and complaints reporting to our governing body.</p>	<p> Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints 2.2</p>	Our Complaints Resolution Team are responsible for the management and oversight of complaints, including liaison with the Housing Ombudsman. Compliance and reporting for complaints to our governing body and Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) are the responsibility of the Customer Experience Director. The Chief Operating Officer, is the executive lead, reporting on complaints to Board. From 4 April 2025, the Executive Director of Operations become the executive lead.
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	<p>Snapshot from Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints Policy:</p> <p>2.3 - Complaints Resolution Leads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act sensitively and fairly • Offer a great customer experience • Ensure the service is inclusive and tailored to diverse needs of residents • Are appropriately trained; this includes the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) • online Dispute Resolution training • Are able to help distressed and upset residents with respect and sensitivity • Have access to colleagues at all levels to aid efficient complaint resolution • Have the authority and autonomy to resolve disputes quickly and fairly. 	<p> Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints 2.3</p> <p>The Complaints Officer has access to all staff and significant influence to get matters resolved.</p>	<p>The Complaints Resolution Team liaise with all levels of appropriate colleagues and have the authority and autonomy to resolve disputes.</p> <p>Complaint handlers are empowered to act quickly and fairly including raising repairs, self-serving information through system accesses and the delegated authority to make compensation payments.</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.3	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	<p> Compliments & complaints</p> <p> A new approach, better outcomes!</p> <p> Improving our resident services</p>	<p>Complaint handling culture is a priority for Southern Housing. Our Complaints Team is resourced to handle complaints.</p> <p>We are continuously improving our complaint handling culture. We have outlined the action that we are taking below. Every colleague has a complaint objective.</p> <p>Our corporate training plan for complaints is underway and due to complete in Summer 2025. So far, we have developed and delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dedicated training catalogue “Empowering complaints resolution” for all colleagues. • Putting It Right - A colleague guide- a dedicated learning module on recognising and handling complaints and colleague responsibility • Putting It Right- A contractor’s guide- specific guidance for our contractors and subcontractors on their responsibilities in recognising and responding to a complaint • An induction and training plan for the Complaints Resolution team <p>Training is provided to all frontline colleagues to embed the importance of putting things right when we’ve got it wrong, learning from complaints to prevent reoccurrence and improve the customer experience.</p> <p>As part of our systems training for integration over 1700 colleagues received training on recognising and responding to complaints, additional needs and adjustments, and good knowledge and information management Specific training for complaint handlers includes Housing Ombudsman online training for dispute resolution, record keeping, and damp and mould. Included in our corporate training matrix are sessions relating to how to act to resolve disputes quickly and fairly, how to show empathy and understanding, dealing with upset and distressed residents, and accessing support. Complaints are discussed at operational performance meetings and contractor performance meetings. Complaint handlers are empowered to act quickly and fairly, this includes the authority to make compensation payments.</p>






Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process




Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	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	Snapshot from Complaints Policy: 3.6 - We treat all residents fairly; we won't treat you unfavourably because you've made a complaint.	 Complaints Policy 3.6	Our Complaints Policy (section 3.6) which stipulates that residents will not be 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	Snapshot of Putting It Right Leaflet (reverse): 	 Complaints Policy 6.0, 7.0  Putting It Right Leaflet	We clearly define the stages of our complaint procedure in our Complaints Policy and in our Putting It Right Leaflet. Both of which are available on our website. We don't have an informal stage. We aim to resolve service requests, such as a missed appointment, immediately with an apology and by providing another appointment.
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		 Complaints Policy 6.0, 7.0	Our Complaints Policy is a two-stage process.





Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.	Yes		Complaints Policy 1.5, 1.6, 3.4, 6.0, 7.0 Putting It Right Leaflet	<p>We handle all complaints ourselves. No complaints are handled by a third party.</p> <p>We have produced and distributed to all contractor staff our "Putting It Right: A contractor guidance" which clearly states that all complaints must be reported to and handled by Southern Housing.</p> <p>We'll continue to embed and monitor our contractor guidance expectations, to ensure that all complaints are channelled to, and managed by, the Complaints Resolution team effectively.</p>
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes		Complaints Policy 1.5, 1.6, 3.4, 6.0, 7.0 Putting It Right Leaflet	<p>We handle all complaints ourselves. No complaints are handled by a third party.</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>6.1 - If you're unhappy with our response to your service request or wish to raise a complaint at stage one of our process, we'll contact you within five working days to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge your complaint; we'll confirm which aspects of your complaint we are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear Establish full details of your complaint, clarifying with you anything that's unclear Find out how you'd like us to resolve it. We'll be clear where your desired outcome may be unreasonable or unrealistic, but we'll focus on what we can do. <p>7.3 - Within five working days of you contacting us, we'll acknowledge your request and confirm our understanding of the issues and outcomes you're seeking. We'll clarify any details of your complaint that are unclear. We'll confirm which aspects of your complaint we are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.</p>	<p>Complaints Policy 6.1, 7.3</p> <p>Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints 2.3</p>	When acknowledging complaints at stage one and two, we contact residents to ensure we understand the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. We summarise our understanding in writing, giving residents the opportunity to highlight if something is misunderstood.
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>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>7.3 - Within five working days of you contacting us, we'll acknowledge your request and confirm our understanding of the issues and outcomes you're seeking. We'll clarify any details of your complaint that are unclear. We'll confirm which aspects of your complaint we are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.</p>	<p>Complaints Policy 6.1, 7.3</p>	We discuss with residents at the earliest opportunity where we're unable to meet a desired outcome, or expectation, and explain why. We set out in our communication and responses to residents, what we are and are not responsible for.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.	Yes	Snapshot from Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints Policy: 2.4 - When investigating, we: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate empathy and respect• Keep an open mind, remaining impartial and deal with complaints on their own merit• Give the resident a fair chance to set out their position• Take measures to address any actual or perceived conflicts of interest• Consider all information and evidence clearly• Keep each complaint confidential as far as possible, only disclosing information if necessary to properly investigate or if there's a safeguarding concern.	 Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints 2.4, 7.0	Addressing requirement A, B, D: We developed and implemented the complaints training plan through 24-25 ensuring it meets all elements of the Housing Ombudsman Code and includes all relevant Housing Ombudsman training and best practice recommendations. The Complaints Resolution Team follow this induction and training plan to ensure appropriate complaint handling skills are in place. This includes dealing with complaints on its merits, acting independently and with an open mind. Training plans for complaint handlers include Housing Ombudsman online training for dispute resolution, record keeping, and damp and mould. Dispute resolution focuses on the principles of acting fairly, putting things right and learning from outcomes. Training is provided by the Complaints Resolution Team and internal and external trainers to frontline colleagues. Helping residents to set out the position: As part of our complaints process, we contact the resident to fully understand the complaint and the outcomes being sought, the circumstances and any adverse findings as a result of our investigations. If applicable, we'll also contact any colleagues who are the subject of the complaint. A final response is then sent, outlining the decision, reasoning and escalation routes. Colleagues are expected to demonstrate and record the reasoning for outcomes and decisions within complaint responses. This is monitored through our quality Assurance Framework. Our resident panels have reviewed our response letters to ensure that they are easy to understand, include all relevant information and meet the Code requirements. Complaint handlers are empowered to act quickly and fairly, including having the authority to expedite compensation payments. Addressing requirement C: The Complaints Resolution Team are independent and impartial and are managed separately from service delivery teams - for example, repairs team, lettings teams.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	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.	Yes	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>6.4 - If, for any reason, we need more than 10 working days to respond to your complaint, we'll explain why and inform you of the expected timescale for our response. You can contact the Housing Ombudsman for advice at any point. We'll continue with our investigation and provide a response within the extended timeframe.</p>	<p> Complaints Policy 6.4</p> <p> Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints 6.0</p> <p> Putting It Right Leaflet</p>	<p>Complaint handlers aim to establish the frequency and methods of updates at first contact and are directly contactable throughout the process. Agreements made are included in the acknowledgement letters along with full contact details.</p> <p>We've reviewed our standard letters to ensure that every letter details how and when we'll keep residents informed about their complaint. This is also included in our Putting It Right Leaflet. This is monitored through our Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints Section 7.</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>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>5.3.1 - We'll take your preferences into account when communicating with you and we'll make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010. See our Reasonable Adjustments & Vulnerable Needs Policy for more information.</p>	<p> Complaints Policy 5.3</p> <p> Reasonable Adjustments and Vulnerable Needs Policy 9.0</p>	<p>Through 24-25, All staff have been trained to recognise, respond to and record additional needs and adjustments in line with our Reasonable Adjustments and Vulnerable Needs Policy. This includes discussing additional needs and any adjustments needed at every contact and updating records accordingly.</p> <p>We ask residents if there are particular circumstances that we need to be aware of when we're contacting them about a complaint. Our systems prompt complaint handlers to discuss and understand residents' circumstances and to act accordingly. This includes making any reasonable adjustments, the frequency of updates and best method of communications with the resident during the complaint process. We know there's more we can do to improve here and our focus for 25-26 is about how we better collect and store any additional needs information in our systems and keep it under active review.</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.	Yes	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>7.7 - There may be occasions when we won't accept a request to review a complaint, for example if the outcome being sought isn't within our power or ability to deliver. In these cases, we'll write to you and explain why. We'll give the options available to you, including your right to contact the Housing Ombudsman, the Building Safety Regulator (if applicable), or the Financial Ombudsman Service (if applicable).</p>	 Complaints Policy 7.7	<p>Our reasons for not accepting a complaint are outlined in our Complaints Policy. This list is not exhaustive, and each case will be looked at on its own merit.</p> <p>Our Complaints Policy outlines 20 working days to escalate a complaint to the next stage. We consider requests after this time, where action plans to deliver complaint commitments in our response will go beyond 20 days. This is reflected in our standard letters.</p>
5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.	Yes	<p>Snapshot from Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints Policy:</p> <p>7.1 - A senior member of the Complaints management team completes monthly quality control audits on 5% of stage one complaints and 10% of stage two complaints closed within the previous month. The checks include compliance against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This framework • Our Complaints Policy • Our Complaints Procedure • Specific requirements of the HOS Complaint Handling Code 2024 that are not detailed within our Policy. 	 Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints 7.0	<p>Our complaints process and procedure ensure we capture full record of the complaint on our internal case management systems. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all records and dates of communications with the resident, colleagues and external parties • all supporting documents including reports or surveys • the outcome of each stage and agreed actions <p>Records are monitored through both data reports and quality checks in line with our Quality Assurance Framework to make sure we're doing this consistently and acting on any issues arising.</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	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>2.5 - We resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity, having assessed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence is needed to fully consider the issue(s) raised • What outcome would resolve the matter • Whether there are any urgent actions required • Whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk 	 Complaints Policy 6.0, 7.0	Our aim is to remedy the complaint at the earliest opportunity at all stages of the complaint, in line with our Complaints Policy.



Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	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	<p>Snapshot from Unacceptable Behaviour Policy:</p> <p>3.12 - Where we've applied any type of restriction to manage a resident or customer's unacceptable behaviour, we'll inform them in writing.</p> <p>3.13 - Any type of restriction will be appropriate to the resident or customer's individual needs identified during the equality impact assessment.</p> <p>3.14 - We'll keep detailed records of any incident(s) of behaviour we deem to be unacceptable.</p> <p>5.1 - We won't set restrictions indefinitely. We'll regularly review any type of restriction put in place to manage a resident or customer's unacceptable behaviour. We'll write to the resident or customer advising how often we'll review the restriction. The review will always be conducted within a 12 month period.</p>	<p> Complaints Policy 3.5</p> <p> Unacceptable Behaviour Policy 3.4, 5.1, 6.1</p> <p> Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 2.4</p>	<p>Our Unacceptable Behaviour Policy states that we'll record and inform any resident in writing of our reasons for any contact restrictions. We'll also set a timescale for reviewing any restrictions. Dates are recorded on our systems and reported to managers monthly for review.</p> <p>The policy we follow is also cross referenced in our Anti-Social Behaviour and Complaints policies.</p>
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	<p>Snapshot from Unacceptable Behaviour Policy:</p> <p>3.5 - We recognise a resident or customer's actions may be affected by a vulnerability, including mental health issues, substance misuse, or other factors. Before we take any formal action, we'll carry out an equality impact assessment to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify any protected characteristics • Understand how best to manage the resident or customer's particular needs • Decide if these needs could be met in any other way. <p>We will make sure the appropriate support is provided to the resident or customer including signposting to the relevant organisations, such as mental health services or the local authority safeguarding team.</p>	<p> Unacceptable Behaviour Policy 3.5, 5.1</p>	<p>Our Unacceptable Behaviour Policy ensures that individual equality impact assessments are conducted prior to any restrictions being put in place for resident contact, to ensure they're reasonable and proportionate. We'll also ensure that relevant support is provided to the resident including signposting or referrals to relevant organisations.</p> <p>Any restrictions are periodically reviewed, and the resident is informed of this in writing.</p>



Section 6: Complaints Stages


Stage 1





Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	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	Snapshot from Complaints Policy: 2.5 - We resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity, having assessed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence is needed to fully consider the issue(s) raised • What outcome would resolve the matter • Whether there are any urgent actions required • Whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk 	Complaints Policy 5.3, 6.0	<p>All complaints are assessed to understand what is required to fully consider the issues and resolution actions. Actions are prioritised to ensure the complaint is resolved as quickly and fairly as possible dependant on complexity and risk.</p> <p>Complaints resolution leads identify vulnerabilities and risk during communication with residents in line with our Reasonable Adjustments and Vulnerabilities Policy. We use this to prioritise actions and provide a response at the earliest opportunity.</p>
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	Snapshot from Complaints Policy: 6.1 - If you're unhappy with our response to your service request or wish to raise a complaint at stage one of our process, we'll contact you within five working days to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge your complaint; we'll confirm which aspects of your complaint we are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear • Establish full details of your complaint, clarifying with you anything that's unclear • Find out how you'd like us to resolve it. We'll be clear where your desired outcome may be unreasonable or unrealistic, but we'll focus on what we can do. 	Complaints Policy 6.1 Putting It Right Leaflet	<p>We define the stages of our complaint procedure in our Complaints Policy, in our Putting It Right Leaflet and on our website. When a complaint is requested, we commit to logging and acknowledgement within five working days of receipt.</p> <p>Between April 2024 to March 2025, we acknowledged 95% of complaints in five days (compared to 89% in 23-24). While our policy complies with the Housing Ombudsman code and our compliance has increased, we recognise that there's more we can do to improve in practice. You can find details of our "Listening, Learning and Making improvements" in our Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report.</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Snapshot from Complaints Policy: 6.3 - We aim to give you a full response within 10 working days of the acknowledgement date.	Complaints Policy 6.3 Putting It Right Leaflet Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report	This timescale is included in our Complaints Policy, procedure, and Putting It Right Leaflet. Compliance and performance are monitored and reported to management and governance groups. Between April 2024 to March 2025, we answered 90% in the required Ombudsman standard (within 10 days or within an agreed extension in line with the Code) compared to 77% in 23-24. While our policy complies with the Housing Ombudsman code and our compliance has increased, we recognise that there's more we can do to improve. You can find details of our "Listening, Learning and Making improvements" in our Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report.
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	Snapshot from Complaints Policy: 6.4 - If, for any reason, we need more than 10 working days to respond to your complaint, we'll explain why and inform you of the expected timescale for our response. You can contact the Housing Ombudsman for advice at any point. We'll continue with our investigation and provide a response within the extended timeframe.	Complaints Policy 6.3, 6.4 Putting It Right Leaflet	If, during our investigation, we need more time to respond (in line with Housing Ombudsman guidance), we'll contact the resident to explain the reasons and seek agreement. Then we'll confirm this in writing to them. This is detailed in our policy and Putting It Right Leaflet.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	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	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>8.1 - You're able to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any point throughout your complaint for advice. Once you've exhausted our complaints process at stage two, you may ask the Housing Ombudsman Service to mediate or investigate the case on your behalf.</p>	<p> Complaints Policy 8.0</p> <p> Putting It Right Leaflet</p>	<p>We signpost the resident to the Housing Ombudsman Service for independent advice, or review when we must extend a timescale for responding. The contact details are provided in our letter templates.</p> <p>Our policy and Putting It Right Leaflet also tells residents that they can contact the Ombudsman Service at any point for advice and contains the contact details.</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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>Snapshot from Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints Policy:</p> <p>4.1 - We send a response as soon as we know the outcome of the complaint. This may be before we've completed all the actions required to remedy the issue.</p> <p>4.2 - We address all points raised in the complaint and set out the investigation findings clearly and concisely. Our response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirms the complaint stage • Gives our decisions and clear reasons for those decisions • Conveys empathy, fairness, and reasonable thinking to show we've considered all points raised • Acknowledges and sincerely apologises for any service failures • References the relevant policy, law, and good practice where appropriate • Includes details of any remedy we're offering to put things right, including how we've calculated any compensation (in line with our Compensation Policy) • Details any outstanding actions and what the resident can expect from us next. • Any action plans focus on a quality, speedy, and satisfactory resolution. • Explains the resident's escalation rights, as detailed in our Complaints Policy • Outlines the dates by which the resident can escalate their complaint if they're unhappy with our response (stage one only). 	<p> Complaints Policy 6.3, 6.5</p> <p> Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints 4.1, 4.2</p>	<p>We send a response as soon as we know the outcome of the complaint. This may be before we've completed all the actions required to remedy the issue. Our responses include an action plan for remaining actions with expected completion dates. These actions are tracked to completion through our systems and reported weekly to our leadership team and included in our governance reporting.</p> <p>We can improve by making technology system changes to improve how we deliver agreed complaint actions.</p>





Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	<p>Snapshot from Quality Assurance Framework - Complaints:</p> <p>4.1 - We send a response as soon as we know the outcome of the complaint. This may be before we've completed all the actions required to remedy the issue.</p> <p>4.2 - We address all points raised in the complaint and set out the investigation findings clearly and concisely. Our response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirms the complaint stage • Gives our decisions and clear reasons for those decisions • Conveys empathy, fairness, and reasonable thinking to show we've considered all points raised • Acknowledges and sincerely apologises for any service failures • References the relevant policy, law, and good practice where appropriate • Includes details of any remedy we're offering to put things right, including how we've calculated any compensation (in line with our Compensation Policy) • Details any outstanding actions and what the resident can expect from us next. Any action plans focus on a quality, speedy, and satisfactory resolution. • Explains the resident's escalation rights, as detailed in our Complaints Policy • Outlines the dates by which the resident can escalate their complaint if they're unhappy with our response (stage one only). 	<p> Complaints Policy 6.5</p> <p> Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints 4.2</p>	Our template response letters include guidance for colleagues to help with consistency. These sections include the complaint definition, the outcomes the resident was seeking and the findings of our investigation against each point, referencing supporting policy, law, or best practice where appropriate. Our Quality assurance checks monitor responses sent to ensure compliance and quality.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>6.2 - If you raise multiple complaints at the same time, we'll provide you with one point of contact, where possible. If you raise further concerns when we've already issued a response, or it would unreasonably delay our response, we'll log it as a new complaint.</p>	<p> Complaints Policy 6.2</p> <p> Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints 2.11</p>	Section 6.2 of our Complaints Policy states how we'll incorporate additional complaints to the Stage one response, unless we've already issued a response, or it would unreasonably delay our response. Where this is the case, we'll log it as a new complaint.
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage one in clear, plain language: <ol 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; and details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service, if the individual remains dissatisfied. 	Yes	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>6.5 - We'll email our acknowledgement and formal response (unless you've requested a different communication method). Our response will confirm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The complaint stage Definition of your complaint Our decision on the complaint Reasons for our decision Clear details of any remedy offered to put things right, including timescales we've agreed with you Details of any outstanding or further actions required and how we'll monitor progress How you can contact us to discuss our findings Details of how to escalate your complaint to stage two if you're not satisfied with the outcome. 	<p> Complaints Policy 6.5</p> <p> Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints 4.2</p>	<p>All these details are provided in our response are included in our Complaints Policy, procedure, process, and training.</p> <p>We use plain language in our responses to residents. We've resident approved standard letters to help ensure consistency and standards.</p> <p>We quality check samples of letters, in line with our quality Assurance Framework, section 7.</p>

Section 6: Complaints Stages




Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	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	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>7.1 - We'll explore if there's anything further we can do, or you can ask us to review your complaint at stage two of our Policy. You must request this within 20 working days of the date of our formal response. We may consider requests after this time at the discretion of the manager responsible for the service.</p>	<p>Complaints Policy 7.1, 7.7</p> <p>Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints 5.1</p> <p>Putting It Right Leaflet</p>	Our Complaints Policy details how we'll escalate to Stage two, our final response, if the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction. We provide the Housing Ombudsman Service contact information, should the resident disagree with our decision in our standard letters and in our Putting It Right Leaflet.
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	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>7.2 - We'll ask you about the reasons you remain dissatisfied with our reply and the outcome you'd like to resolve your complaint.</p> <p>7.3 - Within five working days of you contacting us, we'll acknowledge your request and confirm our understanding of the issues and outcomes you're seeking. We'll clarify any details of your complaint that are unclear. We'll confirm which aspects of your complaint we are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.</p>	<p>Complaints Policy 7.1, 7.3</p>	<p>When a stage two escalation is requested, we commit to logging and acknowledgement within five working days of receipt.</p> <p>When acknowledging Stage two complaints, we summarise our understanding of the issues outstanding and the desired outcomes. Where possible, we'll phone a resident to gain a further understanding of the issue. We include as part of our standard letters, a way for the resident to highlight if something is missed or misunderstood within the letter or email.</p> <p>Between April 24- March 25, we have acknowledged 90% of stage 2 complaints within 5 working days. While our policy complies with the Housing Ombudsman code, we recognise that there's more we can do to improve. You can find details of our "Listening, Learning and Making improvements" in our Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>7.2 - We'll ask you about the reasons you remain dissatisfied with our reply and the outcome you'd like to resolve your complaint.</p> <p>7.3 - Within five working days of you contacting us, we'll acknowledge your request and confirm our understanding of the issues and outcomes you're seeking. We'll clarify any details of your complaint that are unclear. We'll confirm which aspects of your complaint we are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.</p>	<p> Complaints Policy 7.2</p> <p> Putting It Right Leaflet</p>	We do not require an explanation of reasons for requesting a Stage two review. We do seek to understand why the resident remains unhappy and the outcomes they're seeking to resolve the complaint, so that we can give an effective response.
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>7.4 - An appropriately trained Southern Housing staff member with no previous involvement in your complaint will conduct the review.</p>	<p> Complaints Policy 7.4</p> <p> Putting It Right Leaflet</p>	Our Complaints Policy and Putting It Right Leaflet states that an appropriately trained Southern Housing colleague with no previous involvement in the complaint will conduct the review. This is monitored through quality assurance checks.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>7.5 - We'll contact you with our decision within 20 working days of our acknowledgement of your complaint.</p>	<p>Complaints Policy 7.5</p> <p>Putting It Right Leaflet</p> <p>Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report</p>	<p>This timescale for response is included in our policy, procedure, and Putting It Right Leaflet.</p> <p>Compliance and performance are monitored and reported to management and governance groups. Between April 24- March 25, we responded to 91% of stage two complaints in line with the code, compared to 55% in 23-24.</p> <p>While our policy complies with the Housing Ombudsman code and our compliance has increased, we recognise that there's more we can do to improve. You can find details of our "Listening, Learning and Making improvements" in our Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report.</p>
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>7.6 - If, for any reason, we need more than 20 working days to respond to your complaint, we'll explain why and inform you of the expected timescale for our response. You're entitled to contact the Housing Ombudsman for advice at any point. We'll continue with our investigation and provide our response within the extended timeframe.</p>	<p>Complaints Policy 7.6</p>	<p>If, during our investigation, we need more time to provide a response, we'll inform the resident and explain and document why additional time is needed to resolve the complaint. We'll confirm this in writing.</p>



Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	<p>Snapshot from Complaints Policy:</p> <p>8.1 - You're able to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any point throughout your complaint for advice. Once you've exhausted our complaints process at stage two, you may ask the Housing Ombudsman Service to mediate or investigate the case on your behalf.</p>	<p>Complaints Policy 8.1</p> <p>Putting It Right Leaflet</p> <p>Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints 5.3</p>	<p>For any extension to timescales, we'll signpost the resident to the Housing Ombudsman Service for independent advice or review. The contact details are provided in our letter templates, and these are monitored for quality.</p> <p>The Ombudsman's details are also available on our Website and in our Complaints Policy and Putting It Right Leaflet.</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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>Snapshot from Quality Assurance Framework - Complaints:</p> <p>4.1 - We send a response as soon as we know the outcome of the complaint. This may be before we've completed all the actions required to remedy the issue.</p> <p>4.2 - We address all points raised in the complaint and set out the investigation findings clearly and concisely. Our response:</p>	<p> Complaints Policy 7.5, 7.6</p> <p> Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints 2.5, 4.1</p>	We send a response as soon as we know the outcome of the complaint. This may be before we've completed all the actions required to remedy the issue. Our responses include an action plan for remaining actions with expected completion dates. These actions are tracked to completion through our systems and reported weekly to our leadership team.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirms the complaint stage • Gives our decisions and clear reasons for those decisions • Conveys empathy, fairness, and reasonable thinking to show we've considered all points raised • Acknowledges and sincerely apologises for any service failures • References the relevant policy, law, and good practice where appropriate • Includes details of any remedy we're offering to put things right, including how we've calculated any compensation (in line with our Compensation Policy) • Details any outstanding actions and what the resident can expect from us next. Any action plans focus on a quality, speedy, and satisfactory resolution. • Explains the resident's escalation rights, as detailed in our Complaints Policy • Outlines the dates by which the resident can escalate their complaint if they're unhappy with our response (stage one only). 	<p> Complaints Policy 7.5</p>	If, during our investigation, we need more time to provide a response, we'll inform the resident and explain and document why additional time is needed to resolve the complaint. We'll confirm this in writing.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage two in clear, plain language: <ol 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; and details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service, if the individual remains dissatisfied. 	Yes	Snapshot from Complaints Policy: <p>7.5 - We'll contact you with our decision within 20 working days of our acknowledgement of your complaint. Our response will confirm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The complaint stage Definition of your complaint Our decision on the complaint Reasons for our decision Clear details of any remedy offered to put things right, including timescales we've agreed with you Details of any outstanding or further actions required and how we'll monitor progress How you can contact us to discuss our findings Your right to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service if you remain dissatisfied. 	Complaints Policy 7.5, 8.0 Putting It Right Leaflet	All these details are provided in our response are included in our Complaints Policy, procedure training and our stage two response templates. We use plain language in our responses to residents. We've resident approved standard letters to help ensure consistency and standards. <p>We quality check samples of letters, in line with our quality Assurance Framework, section 7.</p> <p>As well as in our standard response templates, section 8.0 of our policy and our Putting It Right Leaflet, details how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service, if residents remain dissatisfied.</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	Snapshot from Quality Assurance Framework - Complaints: <p>5.4 - Complaints Resolution Leads must involve all suitable colleagues to review and issue the Stage two response. A senior member of the Complaints Resolution team must review this before it's issued.</p>	Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints 5.4	After gaining an understanding of the outcomes required for the complaint to be resolved at acknowledgement stage, the case officer arranges a meeting with all appropriate colleagues to support the resolution and response. A senior complaints resolution lead, or complaint resolution manager, reviews and signs off all stage two response letters. This ensures that all relevant colleagues have been involved in investigating and responding to the complaint and that appropriate redress has been considered.

Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	<p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologising; • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; • Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons; • Taking action if there has been delay; • Reconsidering or changing a decision; • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • Providing a financial remedy; • Changing policies, procedures, or practices. 	Yes	<p>Snapshot from Quality Assurance Framework - Complaints:</p> <p>4.1 - We send a response as soon as we know the outcome of the complaint. This may be before we've completed all the actions required to remedy the issue.</p> <p>4.2 - We address all points raised in the complaint and set out the investigation findings clearly and concisely. Our response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirms the complaint stage • Gives our decisions and clear reasons for those decisions • Conveys empathy, fairness, and reasonable thinking to show we've considered all points raised • Acknowledges and sincerely apologises for any service failures • References the relevant policy, law, and good practice where appropriate • Includes details of any remedy we're offering to put things right, including how we've calculated any compensation (in line with our Compensation Policy) • Details any outstanding actions and what the resident can expect from us next. Any action plans focus on a quality, speedy, and satisfactory resolution. • Explains the resident's escalation rights, as detailed in our Complaints Policy • Outlines the dates by which the resident can escalate their complaint if they're unhappy with our response (stage one only). 	<p>Complaints Policy 6.5, 7.5</p> <p>Compensation Policy</p>	<p>In our responses to residents, we apologise, acknowledge where things went wrong and say what we'll do to fix the problem. We offer compensation in line with our complaints and compensation policies. We outline in our response, where lessons have been learnt, and any improvements that have been made as a result of the complaint, where applicable.</p> <p>Lessons learnt are fed into training and coaching for colleagues in the complaints team on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>We involve residents where we plan to make significant changes to policy.</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	<p>Snapshot from Compensation Policy:</p> <p>5.4 - When calculating an award of compensation, we'll consider the extent, severity, and impact of the failure. We'll account for any vulnerabilities or individual circumstances when assessing the impact of the failure.</p>	<p> Compensation Policy 6.5</p> <p> Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints 4.2, 7.0</p>	<p>We use our Compensation Policy and framework, which has been designed using the Housing Ombudsman remedies guidance. Both seek to offer consistent remedies that reflect the extent of service failure and detriment caused to the resident. Remedies for repairs would be carried out in line with our repairs policy.</p> <p>We will simplify the compensation payment process and make it easier for residents in 2025..</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	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	<p>Snapshot from Quality Assurance Framework - Complaints:</p> <p>4.1 - We send a response as soon as we know the outcome of the complaint. This may be before we've completed all the actions required to remedy the issue.</p> <p>4.2 - We address all points raised in the complaint and set out the investigation findings clearly and concisely. Our response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirms the complaint stage • Gives our decisions and clear reasons for those decisions • Conveys empathy, fairness, and reasonable thinking to show we've considered all points raised • Acknowledges and sincerely apologises for any service failures • References the relevant policy, law, and good practice where appropriate • Includes details of any remedy we're offering to put things right, including how we've calculated any compensation (in line with our Compensation Policy) • Details any outstanding actions and what the resident can expect from us next. Any action plans focus on a quality, speedy, and satisfactory resolution. • Explains the resident's escalation rights, as detailed in our Complaints Policy • Outlines the dates by which the resident can escalate their complaint if they're unhappy with our response (stage one only). 	<p>Compensation Policy</p> <p>Quality Assurance Framework – Complaints 4.2, 7.0</p>	<p>We send a response as soon as we know the outcome of the complaint. This may be before we've completed all the actions required to remedy the issue.</p> <p>Our responses include an action plan for any remaining actions with expected completion dates. These actions are tracked to completion through our systems and reported weekly to our leadership team.</p> <p>Any offer of compensation in a response will detail the next steps, if the resident wishes to accept the offer.</p> <p>We can improve by making technology system changes to improve how we deliver agreed complaint actions.</p>
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes		Compensation Policy	Our Compensation Policy and framework are designed using the Housing Ombudsman remedies guidance, redress framework and right to repair.

Section 8: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	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"> a. the annual self-assessment against this code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. 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; c. any findings of non-compliance with this code by the Ombudsman; d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman, in relation to the work of the landlord. 	Yes		<p>Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report</p> <p>Annual Complaints Self Assessment</p>	By September 2025 we'll publish our self- assessment, complaints performance and service improvement report on our website. This will have been scrutinised by Board and responded to in line with requirements.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes		Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report Annual Complaints Self Assessment	From September 25, our self-assessment, annual complaints performance and service improvement report are available on our website and reported to the Board annually, or upon any significant changes. The Boards response is included in the report.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes			We will review and update this self-assessment if required to do so.
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes			We will review and update this self-assessment if required to do so.
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 not able to comply with the code, we will update the Ombudsman and our residents and provide a timescale for returning to compliance. This is included in our corporate Business Continuity Plan.

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	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		Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report Lessons Learnt Framework	<p>We review lessons learnt from complaints and take action to make improvements to resident experience to prevent further complaints.</p> <p>This framework was co-designed with residents. It focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying key themes and root causes of dissatisfaction Shaping and prioritising operational improvement plans Identifying policies, procedures, and guidance for review Identifying training and awareness needs Communicating success stories with residents and staff to demonstrate we're listening to and acting on feedback. <p>Lessons learnt from complaints and service improvements made over the last year are outlined in our annual service improvement report. These are monitored by our Resident Services Committee bi-annually. Performance monitoring is in place for contractors, to ensure that wider issues are identified, discussed, and monitored. Action plans are put in place to address any improvements required. Our Residents Services Committee, Residents Strategy Group and Residents' Complaints Panel review performance on complaints. Improvements are co-created with residents.</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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		Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report Lessons Learnt Framework	<p>Our Southern Service culture and training programme includes learning lessons from complaints and other sources. All new colleagues joining the organisation receive this training as part of their induction.</p> <p>We review lessons learnt from complaints and take action to make improvements to resident experience to prevent further complaints. Our process ensures that lessons learnt from complaints are discussed with colleagues and documented at the point of case closure. The Customer Experience Directorate oversee our lessons learnt framework which helps us to discover, agree, track improvements, define the impact, and promote lessons learnt from multiple sources, including complaints.</p>
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	Yes		Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report Blog: Repairs right first time Blog: Investing in our homes Blog: Transforming our customer service Blog: Working Together to Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	<p>Our Southern Service culture and training programme includes learning lessons from complaints and other sources. All new colleagues joining the organisation receive this training as part of their induction. Learnings from complaints are included in our reports to residents, committees, and Board. Our Residents' Complaints Panel scrutinises performance on complaints, including lessons learnt. Resident scrutiny groups undertake projects to review particular areas of our services. They have recently reviewed the information we share on our website and have made a number of recommendations to improve the content and residents navigation experience.</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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		Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report	<p>Our Executive Director of Operations, who reports to the Chief Executive, is responsible for complaints.</p> <p>Complaints handling and policy ownership for Southern Housing is overseen by the director of customer experience.</p> <p>Lessons from complaints and other sources are reviewed by senior leaders and included in performance reports.</p> <p>Updates for residents' lessons learnt and service improvements are provided through our resident governance groups and are published in annual reports, publicised learning on our website and in our resident magazine.</p>
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		Expectations for the MRC role Housing Ombudsman	<p>We have a lead Board member who is responsible for complaints (MRC) and who is provided with regular information to ensure oversight and insight for the Board. We have updated the Role profile to reflect the expectations of the MRC from Housing Ombudsman.</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	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.	Yes		Expectations for the MRC role Housing Ombudsman	<p>The Board member role description outlines responsibilities – this includes challenging performance and improvement. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings annual complaints performance and service improvement report.
9.7	<p>As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; annual complaints performance and service improvement report. 	Yes		Expectations for the MRC role Housing Ombudsman	<p>Our MRC and governing bodies receive and review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> regular updates on the volume, categories, and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings annual complaints performance and service improvement report.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence snapshot (where possible)	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> <p>a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</p> <p>b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and</p> <p>c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.</p>	Yes			<p>All colleagues had an objective in relation to complaints. For 25-6 this covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ownership and responsibility• Customer service excellence• Accurate record keeping• Responding to resident’s needs• Complaints Policy compliance• Collaborative case resolution• Continuous improvement

