

## Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

Keniston receives a relatively small number of complaints, with six cases received in 2019/20, which were all resolved at stage one and one complaint received up to the end of December for the current year 2020/21.

Keniston have reviewed the new Housing Ombudsman Scheme, which came into effect on 1 September 2020, as well as the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, to assess against our current practices.

The self-assessment document below answers the Housing Ombudsman's questions and emphasises where we need to make amendments.

We have highlighted a number of areas where we need to update our policy and process, to ensure we meet the new Complaint Handling Code.

Keniston will be working on these amendments and will be linking in with our involved residents, to ensure any changes we make have our residents' seal of approval.

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code				Keniston's Comments
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No	
	<p>Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint?</p> <p><i>An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.</i></p>		X	<p><b>We will review our complaints policy and processes in the coming months, completing it by 31 March 2021. This review will incorporate consultation with our Resident Panel.</b></p> <p><b>The new policy will incorporate the new definition and will revise its</b></p>
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	X		

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code				Keniston's Comments
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?  Evidence relied upon	X		exclusions, ensuring they are reasonable and fair to residents.
<b>2</b>	<b>Accessibility</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	X		<p><b>Our policy review will make it clear that complaints are accepted via all social media platforms.</b></p> <p><b>Our new process will include how confidentiality and privacy will be maintained.</b></p> <p><b>The policy will be easily found on our website and will be downloadable.</b></p> <p><b>Our policy review will include formulation of a reasonable adjustments policy as a standalone or incorporated into an existing policy.</b></p>
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?		X	
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?		X	
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	X		
<b>3</b>	<b>Complaints team and process</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	X		<p><b>As we are a small Association, Keniston's Complaint Officer has a purely administrative role in handling complaints. The role ensures that the customer is kept informed throughout the process, keeps</b></p>
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?		X	
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?		X	
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?	N/A		
	Is any third stage optional for residents?	N/A		

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code				Keniston's Comments
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	X		records of all complaints and collates data for the annual report to our Management Team and our Board.
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	X		
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?	1		
<b>4</b>	<b>Communication</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	X		The policy review will align the response timescales to those recommended in the Code.
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	X		
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	X		The accompanying letters and our information leaflet will also be revised.
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	X		
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?	93%		
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	7%		
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledgement 5 working days</li> <li>• Stage one 10 working days from receipt</li> <li>• Stage one (with extension) 20 working days from receipt</li> <li>• Stage two 20 working days from escalation request</li> <li>• Stage two (with extension) 30 working days</li> </ul>	X	X X X	
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	N/A		
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	N/A		

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code				Keniston's Comments
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction	93%		
<b>5</b>	<b>Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	N/A		<b>Keniston have had no cases in the last 5 years referred to the Housing Ombudsman Service.</b>
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	N/A		
<b>6</b>	<b>Fairness in complaint handling</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	X		<b>Our review will ensure all our complaints information is consistent and easy to understand, and that any criteria for not escalating a complaint are clear and reasonable</b>
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	X		
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate?	N/A		
	What was the reason for the refusal?			
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?			
<b>7</b>	<b>Outcomes and remedies</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	X		<b>Keniston's review will consider how we rectify our mistakes as well as learn from them.</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Continuous learning and improvement</b>			
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?			<b>Our review will ensure we record our areas for improvement as a result of complaints made, including publicising our failures, as well as successes.</b>
	How do we share these lessons with:  a) residents?			

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code				Keniston's Comments
	b) the board/governing body? c) In the Annual Report?			<p><b>The review will also set out how we will share our lessons learned and improvements made, with residents, staff and our Board.</b></p> <p><b>The Code will make a difference to how we respond to complaints. A full review of our policy and processes will be completed by 31 March 2021.</b></p>
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	X		
	What changes have we made?			