

## Appendix B – Self-Assessment Form

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

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

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

### Section 1 - Definition of a complaint

#### **Mandatory 'must' requirements**

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <i>'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.'</i>	Yes	This is incorporated in our Complaints policy and expressions of dissatisfaction is responded to within 48 hours.
1.3	The resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must still be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.	Yes	Where we receive negative feedback and expressions of dissatisfaction, these are dealt with as complaints if needed and we will log them as formal where necessary.
1.6	... if further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter, or if the resident requests it, the issue must be logged as a complaint.	Yes	We will log Stage 1 formal complaints as a follow on from contact with the complaint.
1.7	A landlord must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so.	Yes	Our policy document clearly states any exemptions.
1.8	A complaints policy must clearly set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered, and these circumstances should be fair and reasonable to residents.	Yes	As above
1.9	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.	Yes	Included in the Policy

### Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.4	Landlords should recognise the difference between a <b>service request</b> , where a resident may be unhappy with a <b>situation</b> that they wish to have rectified, and a <b>complaint</b> about the <b>service</b> they have/have not received.	Yes	This is done at the point of receiving any negative feedback from the tenant, it will be logged in the correct manner.
1.5	Survey feedback may not necessarily need to be treated as a complaint, though, where possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue their dissatisfaction as a complaint if they wish to.	Yes	We receive feedback usually directly from the tenant or via Manchester City Council Housing Services where a tenant may have used their Rant and Rave Platform. The tenant/resident is contacted and this is explained at that point.

## Section 2 - Accessibility and awareness

### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which residents can make a complaint such as in person, over the telephone, in writing, by email and digitally. While the Ombudsman recognises that it may not be feasible for a landlord to use all of the potential channels, there must be more than one route of access into the complaints system.	Yes	Residents can complain in person, over the telephone, via text, by email and WhatsApp messages. The online form is not currently working but is being looked into and would form another channel for the residents.
2.3	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the number of stages involved, what will happen at each stage and the timeframes for responding.	Yes	The policy and procedure is available on our website and residents can obtain written copies on request.
2.4	Landlord websites, if they exist, must include information on how to raise a complaint. The complaints policy and process must be easy to find on the website.	Yes	As above
2.5	Landlords must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and may need to adapt normal policies, procedures, or processes to accommodate an individual's needs. Landlords must satisfy themselves that their policy sets out how they will respond to reasonable adjustments requests in line with the Equality Act and that complaints handlers have had appropriate training to deal with such requests.	Yes	<p><b>Equality, diversity, and inclusion</b> are related concepts that promote the fair treatment and full participation of all people. <b>Equality means</b> providing equal opportunities and protecting people from discrimination. <b>Diversity means</b> recognising and respecting the differences between people. <b>Inclusion means</b> making everyone feel welcome and valued in their environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of the induction process, all SHOUT TMO staff read the policy on Equality where staff are made aware to treat everyone fairly irrespective of their individual or group characteristics.</li> <li>• Any reports of discrimination will be investigated and dealt with accordingly.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SHOUT TMO will make reasonable adjustments as required under the Equalities Act to ensure that every individual are treated fairly and encourage full participation of all people, making them feel welcomed and valued.</li> <li>• Staff dealing with complaints have had the necessary training to deal with these.</li> </ul>
<b>2.6</b>	Landlords must publicise the complaints policy and process, the Complaint Handling Code and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme in leaflets, posters, newsletters, online and as part of regular correspondence with residents.	Yes	There is a link to the Ombudsman's website on the SHOUT TMO website. These will be included in the SHOUT TMO newsletter when it is published. Staff will be advised to make this part of their regular correspondence with residents as required.

2.7	Landlords must provide residents with contact information for the Ombudsman as part of its regular correspondence with residents.	Yes	These are added to correspondence following complaints.
2.8	Landlords must provide early advice to residents regarding their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service throughout their complaint, not only when the landlord's complaints process is exhausted.	Yes	The information is included within correspondence sent.

### Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.2	Where a landlord has set up channels to communicate with its residents via social media, then it should expect to receive complaints via those channels. Policies should contain details of the steps that will be taken when a complaint is received via social media and how confidentiality and privacy will be maintained.	No	This has not been incorporated into the policy yet but when complaint is received, the resident is contacted directly either via phone or invited to discuss in the office. This will be looked at to incorporate in the future.

## Section 3 - Complaint handling personnel

### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
3.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling to ensure complaints receive the necessary attention, and that these are reported to the governing body. This Code will refer to that person or team as the "complaints officer".	Yes	The policy states clearly who the complaint officer is i.e. the Housing Manager except where the complaint is against the Manager, then it will be handled by a member of the Board of Directors.
3.2	...the complaint handler appointed must have appropriate complaint handling skills and no conflicts of interest.	Yes	

### Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
3.3	<p>Complaint handlers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be able to act sensitively and fairly</li> <li>• be trained to handle complaints and deal with distressed and upset residents</li> <li>• have access to staff at all levels to facilitate quick resolution of complaints</li> <li>• have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes quickly and fairly.</li> </ul>	Yes	The Housing Manager will have the appropriate training and autonomy to resolve complaints quickly and within set time scales. The Board member who is delegated to handle complaints against the Manager or appeals will also have the appropriate knowledge.

### Section 4 - Complaint handling principles

#### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
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<p>4.1</p>	<p>Any decision to try and resolve a concern must be taken in agreement with the resident and a landlord's audit trail/records should be able to demonstrate this. Landlords must ensure that efforts to resolve a resident's concerns do not obstruct access to the complaints procedure or result in any unreasonable delay. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'pre-complaint stage') as this causes unnecessary confusion for residents. When a complaint is made, it must be acknowledged and logged at stage one of the complaints procedure <b>within five days of receipt</b>.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal Complaints are logged on the QL system and updated accordingly and within set timescales.</li> <li>• In the case of Board members who do not have access to the system, their response would normally be passed to a Senior member of MCC Housing Services Team to update the system.</li> <li>• SHOUT TMO has only two stages in the complaint policy.</li> <li>• All complaints are logged and acknowledged within 5 days of receipt.</li> </ul>
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4.2	Within the complaint acknowledgement, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	Yes	Written acknowledgement is sent out once a complaint is received directly by SHOUT TMO and if via Housing Services and automated response is sent out.
4.6	A complaint investigation must be conducted in an impartial manner.	Yes	Any complaints against the Manager is handled by a member of the Board of Directors.
4.7	The complaint handler must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deal with complaints on their merits</li> <li>• act independently and have an open mind</li> <li>• take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest</li> <li>• consider all information and evidence carefully</li> </ul> keep the complaint confidential as far as possible, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter.	Yes	Complaints are dealt with in line with these guidelines even though it is not at this point stated in the policy.  This may need to be added to the policy at a later date.
4.11	Landlords must adhere to any reasonable arrangements agreed with residents in terms of frequency and method of communication	Yes	They will respond as suitable for the tenant/resident as possible.
4.12	The resident, and if applicable any staff member who is the subject of the complaint, must also be given a fair chance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set out their position</li> <li>• comment on any adverse findings before a final decision is made.</li> </ul>	Yes	This will be investigated by the line Manager or the Board member and decisions discussed.
4.13	A landlord must include in its complaints policy its timescales for a resident to request escalation of a complaint	Yes	This is included in the policy
4.14	A landlord must not unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints	Yes	All complaints are dealt with in line with Policy

	procedure and must have clear and valid reasons for taking that course of action. Reasons for declining to escalate a complaint must be clearly set out in a landlord's complaints policy and must be the same as the reasons for not accepting a complaint.		
4.15	A full record must be kept of the complaint, any review and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties and any reports or surveys prepared.	Yes	Records are kept on the QL system and reported on if needed.
4.18	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives when pursuing a complaint.	Yes	This will be under the ASB policy of the Council that we follow.

#### Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.3	Landlords should manage residents' expectations from the outset, being clear where a desired outcome is unreasonable or unrealistic	Yes	As above. Residents are informed at the onset what we can and cannot do.
4.4	A complaint should be resolved at the earliest possible opportunity, having assessed what evidence is needed to fully consider the issues, what outcome would resolve the matter for the resident and whether there are any urgent actions required.	Yes	We try and deal with complaints at the first contact and only barring this would we escalate to the formal complaints procedure.
4.5	Landlords should give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord where this is reasonable.	Yes	We will always give residents the opportunity to give authority to a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party.
4.8	Where a key issue of a complaint relates to the parties' legal obligations landlords should clearly set out their understanding of the obligations of both parties.	Yes	As above.

4.9	Communication with the resident should not generally identify individual members of staff or contractors.	Yes	We follow GDPR policy.
4.10	Landlords should keep residents regularly updated about the progress of the investigation.	Yes	We keep the resident updated as necessary.
4.16	Landlords should seek feedback from residents in relation to the landlord's complaint handling as part of the drive to encourage a positive complaint and learning culture.	Yes	Residents are followed up for feedback for a positive and learning culture.
4.17	Landlords should recognise the impact that being complained about can have on future service delivery. Landlords should ensure that staff are supported and engaged in the complaints process, including the learning that can be gained	Yes	Support given where needed.
4.19	Any restrictions placed on a resident's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be appropriate to their needs and should demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	There are contact alerts for the benefit of staff and residents.

## Section 5 - Complaint stages

### Mandatory 'must' requirements

#### Stage 1

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.1	Landlords must respond to the complaint <b><u>within 10 working days</u></b> of the complaint being logged. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	This is incorporated in the policy and if not reached we will add another 10 working days and the resident is notified accordingly.
5.5	A complaint response must be sent to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue, are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned expeditiously with regular updates provided to the resident.	Yes	We will only respond formally when full investigations have been carried out.

5.6	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	This is drafted into a response to the resident and they are given one month from the date the response was sent to respond if they are unhappy.
5.8	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage one in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the complaint stage</li> <li>• the decision on the complaint</li> <li>• the reasons for any decisions made</li> <li>• the details of any remedy offered to put things right</li> <li>• details of any outstanding actions</li> <li>• details of how to escalate the matter to stage two if the resident is not satisfied with the answer</li> </ul>	Yes	These are all included in the response sent to the resident.

### Stage 2

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.9	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage one it must be progressed to stage two of the landlord's procedure, unless an exclusion ground now applies. In instances where a landlord declines to escalate a complaint it must clearly communicate in writing its reasons for	Yes	This is part of our current policy

	not escalating as well as the resident's right to approach the Ombudsman about its decision.		
<b>5.10</b>	On receipt of the escalation request, landlords must set out their understanding of issues outstanding and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	Yes	This will be covered in our response to the resident.
<b>5.11</b>	Landlords must only escalate a complaint to stage two once it has completed stage one and at the request of the resident.	Yes	Our policy does not allow for complaints to go straight to Stage 2 without first going through a Stage 1 and this will only be at the resident's request.

5.12	The person considering the complaint at stage two, must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage one.	Yes	Stage 1 is usually handled by Staff and Stage 2 by the Board. Where the Board member handled stage 1, the stage 2 is handled by the full Board as stated in the Policy.
5.13	Landlords must respond to the stage two complaint <b><u>within 20 working days</u></b> of the complaint being escalated. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	This is stated in our policy.
5.16	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage two in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the complaint stage</li> <li>• the complaint definition</li> <li>• the decision on the complaint</li> <li>• the reasons for any decisions made</li> <li>• the details of any remedy offered to put things right</li> <li>• details of any outstanding actions</li> </ul> <b>and</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if the landlord has a third stage, details of how to escalate the matter to stage three</li> <li>• if this was the final stage, details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied.</li> </ul>	Yes	This is included in our response and residents are always informed of the next stages and appeal's processes.

### Stage 3

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.17	Two stage landlord complaint procedures are ideal. This ensures that the complaint process is not unduly long. If landlords strongly believe a third stage is necessary, they must set out their reasons for this as part of their self-assessment. A process with more than three stages is not acceptable under any circumstances.	Yes	Our complaint's policy has two formal stages and failing this the complainant is directed to a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party such as the Ombudsman.

5.20	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage three in clear, plain language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the complaint stage</li> <li>• the complaint definition</li> <li>• the decision on the complaint</li> <li>• the reasons for any decisions made</li> <li>• the details of any remedy offered to put things right</li> <li>• details of any outstanding actions</li> <li>• details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied</li> </ul>	Yes	As above
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### Best practice 'should' requirements

#### Stage 1

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.2	If an extension beyond 20 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.	Yes	Residents will be communicated with and explanations provided.
5.3	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response.	Yes	Contact details of the Housing Ombudsman is included in the complaint responses.
5.4	Where the problem is a recurring issue, the landlord should consider any older reports as part of the background to the complaint if this will help to resolve the issue for the resident.	Yes	Cases can be linked or reopened and this will be done during the investigation stage.
5.7	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these should be incorporated into the stage one response if they are relevant and the stage one response has not been issued. Where the stage one response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the complaint should be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	Additional information will always be added to the existing case, however where the issues are not relevant to the current case, then a new complaint case will be opened.

## Stage 2

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.14	If an extension beyond 10 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.	Yes	This is part of the current policy and procedure
5.15	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response	Yes	We would always communicate with the resident and if they are unhappy, direct them to a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party for additional support.

## Stage 3

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
	Complaints should only go to a third stage if the resident has actively requested a third stage review of their complaint. Where	N/A	We have only two stages and therefore

5.18	a third stage is in place and has been requested, landlords must respond to the stage three complaint <b><u>within 20 working days</u></b> of the complaint being escalated. Additional time will only be justified if related to convening a panel. An explanation and a date for when the stage three response will be received should be provided to the resident.		a third stage does not apply.
5.19	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response.	N/A	

## Section 6 - Putting things right

### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
6.1	Effective dispute resolution requires a process designed to resolve complaints. Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right.	Yes	Staff discuss what went wrong and how these can be put right, and be prevented in the future. Such discussions may also involve MCC who own the properties we manage.
6.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the extent of any service failures and the level of detriment caused to the resident as a result. A landlord must carefully manage the expectations of residents and not promise anything that cannot be delivered or would cause unfairness to other residents.	Yes	The Board makes decisions on case by case basis and staff are conversant in the art of the managing resident's expectations.
6.5	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	SHOUT TMO acknowledges receipt of any claim and is advised that this is being this is passed to the Board for their consideration with a response within 28 days unless further investigation or information is required. The recipient is kept up to date should this need to be extended. The Board member handling the claim will contact the resident directly with their decision.
6.6	In awarding compensation, a landlord must consider whether any statutory payments are due, if any quantifiable losses have been incurred, the time and trouble a resident has been put to as well as any distress and inconvenience caused.	Yes	This is handled by the Board who will discuss with the resident and agree an amount.

## Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
6.3	Landlords should look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether anything needs to be 'put right' in terms of process or systems to the benefit of all residents.	Yes	Lessons learnt are discussed with Managers of the Council and within the Organisation to see what can be improved upon.
6.7	In some cases, a resident may have a legal entitlement to redress. The landlord should still offer a resolution where possible, obtaining legal advice as to how any offer of resolution should be worded.	Yes	Any legal issues will be passed to MCC's Counsel

## Section 7 - Continuous learning and improvement

### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.2	Accountability and transparency are integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints in their annual report and more frequently to their residents, staff and scrutiny panels.	No	Complaints are discussed at the Board meetings but have not had discussions with the wider range of residents, only those involved in the complaint. This is something SHOUT will need to look into for the best way of going about doing this.

### Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.3	A member of the governing body should be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This role will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight to the governing body on the landlord's complaint handling performance.	No	This again will have to be raised to the Board for a Board Member to undertake the task.
7.4	As a minimum, governing bodies should receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular updates on the volume, categories and outcome of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance including compliance with the Ombudsman's orders</li> <li>Regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling,</li> <li>The annual performance report produced by the Ombudsman, where applicable</li> <li>Individual complaint outcomes where necessary, including where the Ombudsman made findings of severe maladministration or referrals to regulatory bodies. The implementation of management responses should be tracked to ensure they are delivered to agreed timescales. The annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code for scrutiny and challenge.</li> </ul>	Yes	The complaints received is included in the information presented to the Board by the Housing Manager as part of their report, and is discussed at the Board meetings. This can also be incorporated into the Housing Manager's report for the AGM. Formal complaints are very few.

7.5	Any themes or trends should be assessed by senior management to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks or policies and procedures that require revision. They should also be used to inform staff and contractor training.	Yes	There are very few complaints but these are monitored and where there is a pattern this is raised to MCC Managers for their attention.
7.6	Landlords should have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all employees that reflects the need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments</li> <li>• take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints rather than blaming others</li> <li>• act within the Professional Standards for engaging with complaints as set by the Chartered Institute of Housing.</li> </ul>	Yes	Complaints are discussed and any learning identified. Where required, further customer experience training may be offered to staff.

## Section 8 - Self-assessment and compliance

### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
8.1	Landlords must carry out an annual self-assessment against the Code to ensure their complaint handling remains in line with its requirements.	Yes	This is being done from now on.
8.2	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure and/or change in procedures.	Yes	Should this happen this will be done.
8.3	Following each self-assessment, a landlord must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• report the outcome of their self-assessment to their governing body. In the case of local authorities, self-assessment outcomes should be reported to elected members</li> <li>• publish the outcome of their assessment on their website if they have one, or otherwise make accessible to residents</li> <li>• include the self-assessment in their annual report section on complaints handling performance</li> </ul>	Yes	The report is sent to MCC. The report will be made available under the freedom of information act when requested.