

Appendix A: 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, with 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 do not 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 is easily accessible.

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <i>'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'</i>	No		In our current Complaints Policy there is no definition of a complaint. It's intended that we will be adopting a new policy based on the Almshouse Association's Model policy which would state this.
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 a complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.	No		In our current Complaints Policy it is not stated that the word "complaint" does not need to be used. It's intended that we will be adopting a new complaints policy based on the Almshouse Association's Model policy which would state this.
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	No		In our current Complaints Policy it doesn't differentiate between a complaint and a service request. It's intended that we will be adopting a new complaints policy based on the Almshouse

	not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.			Association's Model policy which would cover this.
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.	No		See 1.4 above
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.	No		See 1.4 above

Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	CWA's policy states that "all residents have the right to complain about any aspect of the service provided to them..."	Our current policy doesn't allow for the non-acceptance of complaints i.e. it's accepted that any and all complaints received would be investigated.
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 twelve 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. 	Yes	CWA's policy states that "This policy does not cover disputes between individual residents, although the CWA may intervene in the interests of good management."	The only circumstances where the policy doesn't apply is disputes between individual residents.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy. 			
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		No time limits are given within the current complaints policy for a complaint to be made
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		Our current policy doesn't allow for the non-acceptance and investigation of complaints i.e. it's accepted that any and all complaints received would be investigated. Once the procedure is exhausted, if the complaint isn't upheld, the policy refers to the right to take the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes		Our current policy doesn't allow for the non-acceptance of complaints i.e. it's accepted that any and all

				complaints received would be investigated.
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Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	A copy of the policy is made available to all residents in their Handbook. It states that they can complain directly, or through a family member or advocate and that they can use a designated person such as an MP or local councillor.	Most residents raise any concerns with the Scheme Manager in person, by either coming to the office or receiving a home visit, usually on the same day that it is raised.
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	A copy of the policy is made available to all residents in their Handbook. It states that they can complain directly, or through a family member or advocate and that they can use a designated person such as an MP or local councillor.	Most residents raise any concerns with the Scheme Manager in person, by either coming to the office or receiving a home visit, usually on the same day that it is raised.
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low	Yes	No formal complaints received in 2024/25	Whilst it's true to state that a low volume of complaints may be a sign that there are difficulties for residents to complain, that's not the case at CWA where personal,

	complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.			tailored contact is the norm and no complaints were made in 2024/25.
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.	Yes	A copy of the policy is made available to all residents in their Handbook. The policy contains a procedure/flowchart which details the various stages. The policy is available on the CWA website.	
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	A copy of the policy is made available to all residents in their Handbook. The policy contains a procedure/flowchart which details the various stages. The policy is available on the CWA website. It also provides information and contact details for the Ombudsman and the Code.	
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	The policy states that they can complain directly, or through a family member or advocate and that they can use a designated person such as an MP or local councillor.	
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the	Yes	Full details of the Ombudsman service, how it operates, the residents' right to use it and the	

	individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.		contact details for the service, are contained in the policy.	
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Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes	The policy states that all complaints should initially be dealt with by the Scheme Manager. It also states that they may ask a friend, advocate or family member to accompany them when meeting with the CEO or Trustees' Panel. It also states that they can complain directly, or through a family member or advocate and that they can use a designated person such as an MP or local councillor to refer the unresolved complaint to the Ombudsman.	
4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	Yes		The Scheme Manager, CEO and trustees all work very closely together to deal with any issues in a timely way. The Scheme Manager has authority and autonomy to deal with any and all residents' issues and concerns on a daily basis.

4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively	Yes	The policy states that it will “learn from complaints and use them to improve services.”	The CEO is attending a webinar on 4/2/25 called the Annual complaint handling and service improvement for small landlords, to gain more information about how we can further improve our complaints handling and reporting.
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Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	Policy attached	We have a single policy which was last reviewed in April 2019, but will be reviewed and updated in 2025.
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	The flowchart in the policy has no additional stages	
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process	Yes		Even if both stages are utilised, this will mean that a formal complaint is resolved

	unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.			within 20 working days of the complaint.
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		
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	The policy states that it covers all aspects of the services provided to them by CWA staff, trustees, volunteers and contractors working on behalf of CWA.	
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as "the complaint definition". If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	No		In our current Complaints Policy there is no definition of a complaint. It's intended that we will be adopting a new policy based on the Almshouse Association's Model policy which would state this.
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are,	No		In our current Complaints Policy there is no definition of a complaint. It's intended that we will be adopting a new policy based on the

	and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.			Almshouse Association's Model policy which would state this.
5.8	<p>At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	The existing policy states CWA will ensure that "...complaints from residents, their families or advocates will be dealt with in an easy, timely and fair manner."	This could however be made more explicit in the new revised policy.
5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.	No		In our current Complaints Policy there are no such timescales. It's intended that we will be adopting a new policy based on the Almshouse Association's Model policy which would state this.
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	No		In our current Complaints Policy there is no reference to reasonable adjustments. It's intended that we will be adopting a new policy based on the Almshouse Association's Model policy which would state this.

	adjustments must be kept under active review.			
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	The policy and procedure therein covers this and the rights which the resident has if they remain unhappy with the outcome of the process.	
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	In the section called Record Keeping, it is stated that "All complaints will be kept in accordance with CWA's Data Protection, Security and Retention policy."	
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	The policy and procedure therein covers this.	CWA will consider whether a compensation policy is necessary and even appropriate, given the low/zero level of complaints received.
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents	Yes	The Residents Handbook sets out the requirements for residents behaviour.	Unacceptable and anti-social behaviour is one of the grounds for setting aside

	and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.			a resident's licence to occupy.
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes		As above

Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	Yes	Our current policy states that “Generally complaints or disagreements are best resolved in an informal way, dealing with them on a face to face basis and before they escalate into something more serious.”	Many of our residents are elderly and/or vulnerable, hence the preference for face to face, informal contact, which is less stressful for them. The policy also allows for family members and advocates to represent the resident instead.
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u>	No		This will be incorporated in the new policy.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	See complaints policy and procedure.	

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.	No		This will be incorporated in the new policy.
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.	No		As above.
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.	No		As above.
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	No		As above.
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation,	No		As above.

	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.			
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response. 	No		As above.

Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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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	See policy and procedure.	
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.	No		This will be incorporated in the new policy.
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.	No		This will be incorporated in the new policy.
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	See policy and procedure.	
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	No		This will be incorporated in the new policy.
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.	No		This will be incorporated in the new policy.

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.	No		This will be incorporated in the new policy.
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.	No		As above.
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.	No		As above.
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman	No		As above

	Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.			
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	See policy and procedure.	

Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	<p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	No		This will be incorporated in the new policy.

7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	No		As above.
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	No		As above.
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	No		As above.

Section 8: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	No		<p>This is the first self-assessment produced by CWA under the new code. Whilst no complaints were received in 2024/25, it's recognised that CWA must review its Complaints Policy and produce a fully compliant one, such as the Almshouse Association's model. This will be done during Q4 of 2024/25 and Q1 of 2025/26.</p>

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		The report was taken to the board of CWA in February 2025 and has now been published on CWA's website, together with the Board's response to the report.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	N/A		
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	N/A		
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.	N/A		Acknowledged and understood.

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply : Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation	
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	Existing policy states that CWA will "...learn from complaints and use them to improve services."		
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.		
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.		
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as			Yes	Existing policy states that the Scheme

	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.				Manager, CEO and a panel of trustees must be involved and accountable.
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').	No			This will be incorporated in the new policy.
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	No			This will be incorporated in the new policy.
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: a. regular updates on the volume, categories and	Yes	The existing policy states "The number and nature of each complaint will be reported to each Board		

	<p>outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;</p> <p>b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;</p> <p>c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and</p> <p>d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.</p>		meeting as a Key Performance Indicator.”		
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</p>	No			<p>This will be considered by the Trustees when it reviews this self-assessment and the existing complaints policy.</p>

	engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.				
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