

## Berneslai Homes

### Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code - Self-assessment form 2024

This self-assessment form has been completed by the Head of Customer Services at Berneslai Homes. In completing this they have considered performance information, our policy and our governance arrangements. Tenants have influenced the self-assessment through their direct involvement as we developed our revised 2024 Complaint Policy.

The self-assessment reflects on performance in the 2023/24 year and takes into account the revised Housing Ombudsman Code and its responsibilities which became a legal duty from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

This self-assessment has been reviewed by [Customer Services Committee](#) and [BMBC Cabinet](#).

BMBC Member responsible for Complaints and our Board Complaint Champion have produced their response which is published on our [website](#).

Where practicable links have been provided to the evidence. Other evidence listed can be provided for the Housing Ombudsman if requested.

The self-assessment will be reviewed in May 2025 unless we are required to do so earlier as a result of any judgment by the Housing Ombudsman or any significant changes to our complaint handling policy or procedures.

## Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.1	Effective complaint handling enables residents to be heard and understood. The starting point for this is a shared understanding of what constitutes a complaint.	n/a	n/a	Response not required as not part of the self-assessment process. Included for completeness
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>	Yes	Section 5 of our <a href="#">Complaint Policy</a> defines a complaint in this way.	<i>Our policy definition is: 'A complaint is 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>
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	Section 5 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> sets out this requirement	Our complaints policy section 5 states: <i>'A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction, we must give them the choice to make a complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative will be handled in line with our complaints policy in agreement with the resident.'</i> Complaint handling training for staff forms part of the corporate induction with mandatory eLearning training to be completed within the first week. This eLearning is completed as a refresher course by staff yearly and is mandatory training. We issue routine communication to staff via team briefs when there are changes to policy. We ask on our complaints <a href="#">eform</a> if they would like us to speak with a representative Our <a href="#">website</a> has information about complaints submitted by a third party.

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>Our <a href="#">complaints policy</a> recognises this difference:</p> <p>Our <a href="#">website</a> frequently asked questions explains the difference.</p>	<p>Our complaint policy has this definition: <i>'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 we record them, monitor, and review them for learning and improvements.'</i></p> <p>Staff training set out the difference between a service request and a complaint. We record service requests on our main IT system (NEC). These are monitored and review in our performance reports. They are discussed at monthly performance meetings and <a href="#">published in our quarterly performance</a> report.</p>
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>We include this approach in our complaints policy <a href="#">section 5</a></p> <p>Our <a href="#">website FAQs</a> includes a question "How do you deal with my complaint?" The response outlines how we respond to complaints relating to handling of service requests.</p>	<p>Our policy states: <i>'Where a resident expressed dissatisfaction with our handling of a service request, we will raise a complaint, even where the service request is ongoing.'</i></p> <p>We include this requirement in staff training On our complaints handling survey, we ask a question on 'How easy it was to make a complaint'. During 23/24, 77% found it easy to make a complaint.</p>
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>We explain that surveys are not counted as complaints in: Section 5 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> states</p> <p>Our <a href="#">website</a> has an FAQ</p>	<p>Our complaints policy section 5 states: <i>'If residents express dissatisfaction with services when completing a satisfaction survey, we do not treat this as a complaint. All surveys will clearly outline how to make a complaint if the resident wishes to do so.'</i></p> <p><b>The FAQ on our website states: Will my survey response be treated as a complaint? -</b></p> <p>Our complaints survey or any other surveys that are carried out within Berneslai Homes: has a statement outlining that response to surveys are not handled as complaints And include the following statement Our survey includes this advice: <i>"This survey is to gather feedback from our tenants. If you have experienced any dissatisfaction with the service you have received and would like to make a</i></p>

				<p>complaint, you can do this by completing our <a href="#">online form</a> or you can contact us in the following ways:          By phoning 01226 787878 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)          By emailing <a href="mailto:customerservices@berneslaihomes">customerservices@berneslaihomes</a></p>
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## 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	Section 5 of our <a href="#">Complaint Policy</a> sets out the complaints we will not accept and how we explain our decision to residents:	<p><i>Our policy states:            If we decide not to accept a complaint, we will provide a detailed explanation to the resident within 5 working days setting out:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•<i>The reasons why the complaint will not be dealt with under our Complaints policy.</i></li> <li>•<i>Any individual circumstances we considered in making our decision; and</i></li> <li>•<i>The resident's right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Each complaint is considered on an individual basis, we do not take a one size fits all approach when excluding complaints.            See 2.2 below            We make staff aware through training –</i></p> <p>We record and report on complaints that we have not accepted, on our NEC system.</p> <p><b>Complaints rejected</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>23/24</td> <td>24/25 (to 1/6/24)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of complaints</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </table>		23/24	24/25 (to 1/6/24)	Number of complaints	1	3
	23/24	24/25 (to 1/6/24)								
Number of complaints	1	3								

				rejected		
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"> <li>• The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>Section 5 of our <a href="#">Complaint Policy</a> sets out the complaints we will not accept and how we explain our decision to residents.</p> <p>We also confirm this on the <a href="#">FAQ section</a> of our website: :</p>	<p>Our complaints policy section 5 states:</p> <p><i>We will not consider complaints in the following circumstances:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Where the issue giving rise to the complaint occurred more than twelve months ago, or the resident became aware of it more than 12 months ago. We may apply discretion where the resident was unable to make the complaint earlier (for example health grounds) or where the complaint raises safeguarding or health and safety issues.</i></li> <li>• <i>Where 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.</i></li> <li>• <i>Where the issue being raised should be dealt with under any statutory review procedure including but not limited to decisions made under the terms of the Lettings Policy or our Tenancy Policy. More information about the review process for these policies is on our website.</i></li> <li>• <i>Where a resident makes a complaint it should be dealt with as a review, we will confirm with the resident the process that we will follow.</i></li> <li>• <i>Where the matters have previously been considered under both stages of this complaints policy.</i></li> <li>• <i>Where a claim arises relating to alleged damage of belongings or personal injury, these are investigated through the Insurance route by Barnsley Council.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Where a complaint has been pursued in a way that we determine is unreasonable.</i></p>		

				<p><i>When a resident repeatedly makes serious allegations that employees or contractors have committed criminal, corrupt, or perverse conduct without any evidence’.</i></p> <p>We record and report on complaints that we have not accepted, on our NEC system. See 2.1</p>
2.3	<p>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.</p>	Yes	<p>Section 5 of our <a href="#">policy</a> confirms that we accept complaints in these circumstances Our <a href="#">website</a> also explains this.</p>	<p>Section 5 of our <a href="#">policy</a> which states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>‘Where the issue giving rise to the complaint occurred more than twelve months ago, or the resident became aware of it more than 12 months ago. We may apply discretion where the resident was unable to make the complaint earlier (for example health grounds) or where the complaint raises safeguarding or health and safety issues.’</i></li> </ul> <p>Our training demonstrates how we set out this expectation for staff</p> <p>We notify the customer in writing in our acknowledgement letter, we detail the points we won’t investigate and reasons why. We save a copy of this letter in the complaint case folder within Sharepoint</p>
2.4	<p>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.</p>	Yes	<p>Section 5 of <a href="#">our policy</a> explains this requirement. Our <a href="#">website</a> FAQs explain this too.</p>	<p>Our complaints policy section 5 states: <i>‘If we decide not to accept a complaint, we will provide a detailed explanation to the resident within 5 working days setting out:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>The reasons why the complaint will not be dealt with under our Complaints policy.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Any individual circumstances we considered in making our decision; and</i></li> <li>○ <i>The resident’s right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.’</i></li> </ul>

				We record and report on complaints that we have not accepted, on our NEC system. See 2.1
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Section 5 of <a href="#">our policy</a> - sets out that we do not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints.  Our <a href="#">website</a> FAQ explains this. –	<i>Section 5 of our policy states:</i> <i>“Each complaint is considered on an individual basis; we do not take a one size fits all approach when excluding complaints.”</i>  We record and report on complaints that we have not accepted. See 2.1

### 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	Section 6 of our <a href="#">policy</a> sets out the varied and accessible ways in which a resident can make a complaint and the reasonable adjustments we make.  Section 14 of the policy contains our EDI statement and how we monitor accessibility. We have an <a href="#">Equality Diversity and Inclusion</a> Strategy which is published on our website  Our complaints <a href="#">eform</a> asks if the customer has any additional support or requirements  On our complaints handling survey, we ask a question on 'How easy it was to make a complaint' - During 23/24, <b>77%</b> found it easy to make a complaint.	We are developing our Reasonable Adjustment Policy and this will be published on our website once agreed. Scheduled July 2024.  This is a <a href="#">summary of the 23/24 complaint handling survey results</a>

<p>3.2</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Section 4 of <a href="#">our policy</a> sets out roles and responsibilities of staff and we train all our frontline staff in identifying complaints and understanding the next steps (Section 13) and passing on to our trained complaint handlers</p> <p>Complaint handing is a mandatory part of our on boarding.</p> <p>We communicate through our e-bulletin to staff and team briefs when there's a change in policy.</p> <p>On our complaints handling survey, we ask a question on 'How easy it was to make a complaint' -</p> <p>During 23/24, 77% found it easy to make a complaint. - This is a <a href="#">summary of the 23/24 results</a></p>	<p>Our policy states in Section 4 “<i>All staff are trained and have responsibility for recognising complaints and making sure that if they are not responsible for handling the complaint that they support the resident by referring the complaint to the appropriate person quickly and explaining the next steps to the resident.</i>”–</p> <p>Complaint policy at section 13 states:  <i>‘Mandatory Complaint Handling training is available as eLearning and provides a basic overview of the complaint policy and procedure. This training forms part of the Corporate Induction for all new members of staff and we expect existing staff to complete refresher training at regular intervals. This ensures that all staff can recognise a complaint, making sure that if they are not responsible for handling the complaint that they support the resident by referring the complaint to the appropriate person quickly and explaining the next steps to the resident. The Customer Services Team delivers in-depth Complaint Handling training to managers, investigating officers and contractor investigating officers. This will ensure officers have the skills to handle, investigate and respond to complaints effectively. On completion of this training, the complaint handler will have the skills to;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Deal with complaints on their merits, act independently and have an open mind.</i></li> <li>• <i>Give the resident a fair chance to set out their position.</i></li> <li>• <i>Take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest.</i></li> <li>• <i>Consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.</i></li> </ul>
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				<p>We ensure that the training clearly promotes our standard objectives in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties and reflects the following needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments.</li> <li>• To take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others.</li> <li>• To act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.'</li> </ul>
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 complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.	Yes	<p>Whilst we set an annual target that our complaint volumes are in line with peer group median, we welcome and see complaints as positive. Our staff training encourages complaints.</p> <p>Our <a href="#">website</a> promotes that it is OK to complain.</p> <p>We run campaigns to increase awareness of complaints and have promotional information in our public spaces and online,</p>	<p>Section 9 of our <a href="#">Complaints Policy</a> states:</p> <p><i>'We promote a positive complaint handling culture. We encourage staff to use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery'</i>.</p> <p>During 23/24, 77% found it easy to make a complaint. - This is a <a href="#">summary of the 23/24 results</a> In 24/25 we will be reviewing our approach to insight and enhancing our Customer Engagement and Insight Strategy, which is scheduled for approval in July 2024.</p> <p>We are also enhancing the <a href="#">performance section</a> of our website to increase transparency. These updates will be finalised by end of July 2024</p>
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,	Yes	<p>Our <a href="#">policy</a> is published online and as a download and we have a <a href="#">FAQs</a> on our website which outlines our 2 stage approach and timeframes.</p>	<p>Our involved tenants have approved our revised complaint policy and have given views on our web content and printed material. Our acknowledgement letters have the summary</p>

	<p>what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is also a link from <a href="#">BMBCs website</a>. –</li> <li>• Our <a href="#">Facebook page</a> also provides information</li> <li>• Posters in community buildings and other local noticeboards</li> <li>• Translation functionality on our website.</li> </ul>	<p>process printed on the reverse and we have template letters with all the relevant timescales and next steps.          By the end of October 2024, we will work with Barnsley Equality Fora to develop an easy ready version of our policy.          We have consulted tenants on our new tenant pack which has a section on complaints – due for print August 24.</p>
<p>3.5</p>	<p>The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Section 6 of our <a href="#">Complaints policy</a> sets out the ways that we publicise details of the complaints policy and including the Ombudsman and the Code.</p> <p>Section 10 of the <a href="#">complaints policy</a> provides details of the Housing Ombudsman and the Code.</p> <p>We publish this information in our annual report, tenant e-bulletin and posters in communal spaces.</p>	<p>Our Policy states:  <i>'We publicise this policy on our website in a format that can be downloaded, printed, or zoomed in. A shorter, easy to read summary of the key parts of this complaint policy, including how to make a complaint and what to expect is also available on our website.</i></p> <p><i>We have posters displayed on the notice boards within the communal areas of our buildings across the borough. We also provide all new tenants with a 'New Tenant Information Pack' at sign up. This pack gives details about how to make a complaint, our complaints policy and the Housing Ombudsman's contact details.</i></p> <p><i>We promote residents to stay connected with us and provide us with their email address to receive communication from us which includes our monthly Ebulletin and annual report. In these publications we include information of the complaints policy and our complaints performance. We use social media platforms to publicise the complaints policy, encouraging residents to let us know if somethings gone wrong and give us the opportunity to put things right. The key message we share with residents is</i></p>

				<i>that 'It's Okay to Complain'.</i>
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	<p>Section 6 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> explains how residents can use a representative</p> <p>We also publish this on <a href="#">our website</a></p> <p>We ask about representatives on our complaint <a href="#">e-form</a>:</p> <p>When making a complaint the complaint handler will ask the resident if they have a preferred contact method and any additional support they may need.</p>	<p>Section 6 of our complaints policy states: <i>'A complaint can be made in any of the following ways: By a third party or representative (e.g. family, friends, Local Authority Councillor, MP, Board Member, Mayor's office). (We deal with normal day to day enquiries from councillors through a separate procedure, but we clarify with the resident and/or councillor whether the contact is an enquiry or a complaint).</i></p> <p>We are amending our NEC IT system to record the source of complaint and will use this analysis to provide evidence. We aim to have this completed by end July 2024.</p>
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>Section 10 of our <a href="#">policy</a> sets out our commitment to provide this information to residents.</p> <p>This is included in the FAQ section of our <a href="#">website</a> and all acknowledgement and response letters.</p>	<p>Section 10 of our complaints policy states: <i>'The role of the Ombudsman is to resolve complaints between landlords and residents. This includes investigating the complaint independently to decide if the landlord or the managing agent has acted appropriately, along with making decisions around compensation or other remedies if needed. The Ombudsman support effective landlord and resident dispute resolution.'</i></p> <p><i>'Residents can contact them regarding enquiries and advice at any point before or during the complaint process. Their contact details are below: Phone: 03001113000 E-mail <a href="mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk">info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk</a> Online at <a href="http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk">www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk</a> Post to Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET'</i></p>

## 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	<p>We have a centralised Customer Services Team who have responsibility for complaint handling and supporting other colleagues who investigate and respond to complaints.</p> <p>Section 4 of our <a href="#">Complaint Policy</a> sets out these responsibilities.</p> <p>Stage 1 complaints are handled by service area responsible officers who have all been trained.</p> <p>The Customer Services Team lead on Stage 2 and Housing Ombudsman Investigations.</p> <p>The Customer Services Team have an audit, compliance and learning role. The Customer Services Team are responsible for producing reports including reports to the governing body (Board and BMBC).</p>	<p>Section 4 of our complaint policy states: <i>'All staff are trained and have responsibility for recognising complaints and making sure that if they are not responsible for handling the complaint that they support the resident by referring the complaint to the appropriate person quickly and explaining the next steps to the resident.'</i></p> <p><i>Staff with responsibility for Complaint handling (Investigating Officers)</i></p> <p><i>We have a pool of officers (including contractor leads) with the appropriate level of training and responsibility to investigate and respond to complaints at Stage 1 and Stage 2.</i></p> <p><b>Customer Services Team</b></p> <p><i>We have a small team of specialist staff who co-ordinate and oversee our complaint handling service. They are responsible for the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Developing and reviewing this policy and procedures.</i></li> <li>• <i>Completing the Annual Self-Assessment against the code.</i></li> <li>• <i>Performance monitoring and reporting.</i></li> <li>• <i>Gathering resident feedback.</i></li> <li>• <i>Offering specialist support and guidance to investigating officers.</i></li> <li>• <i>Stage 2 investigations.</i></li> </ul>

				<p><b>Lead Officer Roles</b></p> <p><i>Our Head of Customer Services is the Lead Officer with responsibility for complaint handling and compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Code.</i></p> <p><i>Our Senior and Executive Management Team have shared responsibility for ensuring their service areas handle complaints in line with this policy and the Housing Ombudsman Code. They have responsibility for ensuring resolutions are delivered effectively and their service responds to any learning.</i></p> <p><i>They have authority to issue the final Stage 2 response to complaints.</i></p>
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>Job profiles for the Customer Services Team (Complaints Officers) include this authority and autonomy.</p> <p>Section 4 of our <a href="#">complaints policy</a> contains responsibilities for different officers.</p>	<p>See 4.1 above.</p> <p>The Customer Services Team have direct access to EMT diaries to set up meetings to discuss complaints and raise concerns. We have escalation processes for the customer services officers to raise concerns with senior officers about complaint handling.</p>
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	<p>Section 9 of the <a href="#">complaint policy</a> sets out our positive approach to handling and learning from complaints.</p> <p>Complaints handling awareness is a mandatory aspect of our onboarding for all staff. Officers with responsibility for complaint investigation and resolution complete mandatory training including refresher training.</p> <p>All complaints are reviewed on completion and service improvements</p>	<p>Section 9 of our Complaints Policy states: <i>'We promote a positive complaint handling culture. We encourage staff to use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery'.</i></p> <p><i>At the closure of each complaint the investigating officer is responsible for reviewing the complaint, looking beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint to identify any learning.</i></p> <p><i>The investigating officer will complete a 'Service Improvement Review Form' to record any learning and actions.</i></p>

			<p>identified, recorded and monitored by our Service Improvement Team.</p> <p>We have monitoring and reporting frameworks in place including ensuring good governance and tenant influence.</p> <p>We have a form for staff to complete when a service improvement has been identified</p> <p>We increased permanent resources within the Customer Services Team in 2023/24 and for 24/25 we have increased temporary resources to improve our capacity to resolve complaints at the 1<sup>st</sup> stage more effectively.</p> <p>In 23/24, 65% of residents were <a href="#">satisfied</a> with the way their complaint was handled.</p>	<p><i>The Customer Services Team will record all learning on the Service Improvement log, and they are responsible for monitoring service improvements through to implementation.</i></p> <p><i>We report on continuous learning and actions to address learning from complaints in following ways:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>•Residents through regular updates on our website, social media and in our annual reports.</i></li> <li><i>•Involved residents through our Service Improvement Panel Group which meets every 3 months and our Tenant Voice Panel on an annual basis.</i></li> <li><i>•Staff through regular team brief updates and training.</i></li> <li><i>•Executive Management Team, Board, Customer Service Committee and the Council through sharing our quarterly performance reports which includes key performance indicators and learning.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>The response from Customer Services Committee is published on our website.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>•The Council through quarterly update reports at Service Agreement Core Group Meetings. This is a meeting of senior executives of Berneslai Homes and BMBC. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure Berneslai Homes is delivering services in line with the requirements of our contract.</i></li> <li><i>•The Council and involved tenants at the ALMO Strategic Liaison meeting. This meeting is attended by BMBC and the Cabinet Spokesperson for Regeneration and Culture (Member Responsible for Complaints) and considers Berneslai Homes performance against our strategic objectives. It enables tenants to have a direct dialogue with their landlord on key issues including complaint handling performance and learning from</i></li> </ul>
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				<p><i>complaints.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The Council through specific complaint handling and learning reports to Cabinet. The response from MRC is published on our website.</li> </ul>
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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	<p>We have one single <a href="#">complaint policy</a> which welcomes complaints and ensures people who complain are treated positively and with courtesy and respect. -</p> <p>We use <a href="#">social media platforms</a> to publicise the complaints policy, encouraging residents to let us know if somethings gone wrong and give us the opportunity to put things right.</p> <p>Our <a href="#">website</a> promotes that it is OK to complain.</p>	In 23/24, 73% of complainants completing <a href="#">a survey</a> were satisfied that we treated them fairly
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	<p>We only have 2 stages in our <a href="#">complaint policy</a>. We do not have an informal stage. This is published on our <a href="#">website</a> and acknowledgement letters and <a href="#">printed guides</a></p> <p>We have an early resolution guide for staff to follow.</p>	Our tenant voice panel support our approach to complaint handling and influenced the development of our policy.
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the	Yes	Our <a href="#">policy</a> has only 2 stages.	We have a 2-stage process and do not have an 'informal' stage.

	complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.			
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	Section 5 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> set out that complaints handled by our contractors must be handled in line with our policy.	Section 5 of our complaints policy outlines that complaints handled by our contractors must be handled in line with our policy. Our SLAs and Contracts also set out this requirement and key personnel from these organisations attend complaint handling training.  Where a complaint crosses different service areas and/or organisations we appoint a Berneslai Homes lead to co-ordinate one response.  Acknowledgement letters explain who is responding and what the process is.
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	Section 5 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> sets out how we handle complaints about third parties.	See 5.4 above.  Our Customer Services Team validate a stage 1 response from a contractor before sending to a resident.  All contractors' have nominated complaint handlers who attend training before handling complaints.
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	Section 7 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> which is published on our <a href="#">website</a> sets out how we define and acknowledge complaints.  In 23/24, <a href="#">72% of complainants were satisfied</a> with our understanding of their complaint.	Our acknowledgement letters have a template which includes the "complaint definition", our understanding and the outcomes the resident is seeking.  Where there is any doubt, we will contact the resident.
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear	Yes	This is covered in Section 7 of our <a href="#">Complaint Policy</a> and summarised on	See 5.6 above.



	which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.		our <a href="#">website</a> FAQs	Our standard acknowledgment letters have a section outlining the aspects of the complaint we are dealing with, and we clarify areas outside of our responsibility. We contact residents to clarify areas we are not clear about and include this in our letters.
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	Section 7 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> meets these requirements and section 7 sets out our approach to training.  Our complaint handling <a href="#">satisfaction surveys</a> measures resident feedback and experience.	All staff receive mandatory complaint handling awareness training and complaint handlers have more in-depth training which is refreshed annually.
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	Section 7 of our <a href="#">Complaint Policy</a> , our <a href="#">website</a> and our acknowledgement letters outline our approach to timescales. Performance reports are shared with Board and BMBC. In 23/24 we handled <b>76%</b> of stage 1 complaints in time and <b>96%</b> of stage 2 and only <b>52%</b> of complainants were satisfied with being kept informed. In 24/25 we have realigned and increased resources to strengthen compliance and enhance the service experience for residents.	<i>Section 7 of our complaints policy states: "There may be occasions when due to the complexity of the complaint, we need extra time to investigate. Should an extension to the standard timescale be needed we will inform the resident of this and the reasons. Where possible we aim to do this at least 2 working days before the deadline. Any extension must be no more than a further 10 working days without good reason. If the extension is not acceptable with the resident, the resident can always contact the Housing Ombudsman to discuss this further. We will provide the resident with the Housing Ombudsman contact details in all complaint correspondence letters".</i>
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act	Yes	Section 6 and 14 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> outlines how we make reasonable adjustments.	Section 6 of our complaints policy states: <i>'Reasonable adjustments. We will support the needs of our diverse residents</i>

	<p>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.</p>		<p>We summarise this approach on our <a href="#">website</a> and <a href="#">printed guide</a></p> <p>We record diversity data alongside our complaint records and use this to analyse and assess for any negative impacts.</p> <p>When making a complaint the complaint handler will ask the resident if they have a preferred contact method and any additional support they may need. Our Complaints <a href="#">eform</a> asks if the customer needs any additional support, reasonable adjustments or has any vulnerabilities that we should be aware of.</p> <p>We have amended our database to record where reasonable adjustments have been made and by the end of 24/25 will be able to strengthen our awareness of and actions to enhance accessibility.</p>	<p><i>by making reasonable adjustments to our complaint handling processes, which could be a physical change or change in work practices to avoid any disadvantage to a resident in accessing this policy.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•We will provide information in appropriate alternative formats (e.g. large print, coloured paper, Braille etc.).</li> <li>•We will communicate through a representative.</li> <li>•We will allow more time than we would usually for someone to provide information we need (where it is lawful to do so).</li> <li>•We will provide additional support such as a sign language interpreter or translator.</li> <li>•We will use plain language or Easy Read service.</li> <li>•We will meet residents in person in a suitable location that meets their needs.</li> <li>•We will support comfort breaks or rest breaks during meetings.</li> <li>•Responding to complaints in a shorter timescale.</li> </ul> <p><i>This policy is published on our website, and residents can do the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Change colours, contrast levels and font size.</li> <li>•Zoom in up to 300% without text spilling off the screen.</li> <li>•Access the policy from a smart phone, tablet, laptop, or PC.</li> </ul> <p>Section 14 of our complaints policy states:  <i>‘We will ensure equal and fair access to our services; we will do this by taking into consideration the individual needs of our tenants, their family or other persons living with them. We will ensure that individual needs are considered throughout the complaint process and make reasonable</i></p>
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				<p><i>adjustments where necessary. We will treat people fairly and with dignity and respect.</i></p> <p><i>We monitor complaints to ensure we have complied with our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2022-25.</i></p> <p><i>All staff are trained in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion to embed understanding about where we may need to adapt normal policies, procedures, and ways of working to accommodate resident's individual needs. This is mandatory training which is monitored by our Organisational Development Team.</i></p> <p><i>Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy meets our duties under the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) is about the following:</i></p> <p><i>Equality - Of access to opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>Diversity – Recognise and celebrate differences.</i></p> <p><i>Inclusion – Belonging and acceptance, feeling valued for who you are'</i></p>
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>Section 7 of our <a href="#">policy</a> sets out the reasons we will refuse to escalate to stage 2.</p> <p>This is also documented in any decision letter and recorded on our IT system.</p> <p>Residents are advised of their right to contact the HO.</p>	<p>Section 7 of our complaints policy states:</p> <p><i>'If we have accepted the complaint and responded at stage 1, we would only refuse to escalate the complaint to stage 2 for either of the following reasons:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• If the complaint should not be looked at further because it could compromise legal proceedings to do so.</i></li> <li><i>• If it has now become clear that this complaint has previously fully exhausted the complaints process.'</i></li> </ul>
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,	Yes	We record all complaints on our Housing Management system, NEC and documentation in restricted access files in Sharepoint.	We record on our NEC system details of the complaint, date the complaint was received and responded to and the outcome of all stages, We keep separate files for complaints and this includes all of the details, outcomes, evidence

	correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.			contact, supporting documentation and correspondence. They are kept in line with our 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	<p>Section 8 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> sets out our intention to remedy complaints at any stage and is consistent with the code.</p> <p>We have a compensation policy and this is being updated by end July 2024</p> <p>We publish our range of remedies <a href="#">online</a></p> <p>Staff responsible for complaint handling receive training on remedy and resolution.</p>	<p>In section 8 of our complaints policy, it states: <i>'Where something has gone wrong, we will acknowledge this within the response letter and set out the actions we have taken or intend to take to put things right.</i></p> <p><i>These can one or more of include the following remedies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Apologising.</i></li> <li>• <i>Acknowledging where things have gone wrong.</i></li> <li>• <i>Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons.</i></li> <li>• <i>Taking action if there has been a delay.</i></li> <li>• <i>Reconsidering or changing a decision.</i></li> <li>• <i>Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum.</i></li> <li>• <i>Providing a financial remedy.</i></li> <li>• <i>Changing policies, procedures, or practices.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Any remedy we offer will reflect the impact the failing has had on the resident.</i></p> <p><i>In our response we will set out what will happen and by when and we will, where appropriate, agree this with the resident.</i></p> <p><i>Where we are offering financial remedy, we will follow our Compensation Policy which we have developed in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman remedies guidance.'</i></p>
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords	Yes	We have a warning indicator policy which details unacceptable behaviour and how we manage this.	In section 12 of our complaints policy, it states: <i>'We believe that residents have a right to be heard, understood, and respected. We work hard to be open and accessible to everyone. Occasionally, the</i>

	<p>must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.</p>		<p>We also make reference to this in section 12 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a></p>	<p><i>behaviour or actions of individuals using our service make it very difficult for us to deal with their complaint. In a small number of cases the actions of individuals become unacceptable because they involve abuse of our staff or our process.</i></p> <p><i>We understand that residents may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a resident approaching us to make a complaint. However, we will not tolerate the following behaviour or actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Verbal abuse, aggression, or violence – unacceptable language that is offensive, derogatory, patronising, discriminatory, racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic comments.</i></li> <li>• <i>Serious allegations that other residents or staff have committed criminal, corrupt, or perverse conduct without any evidence.</i></li> <li>• <i>Unreasonable demands (e.g. requesting large volumes of information, asking for responses within a short space of time, refusing to speak to an individual or insisting on speaking with another)</i></li> <li>• <i>Unreasonable persistence (refusing to accept the answer that has been provided, continuing to raise the same subject matter without providing any new evidence, continuously adding to, or changing the subject matter of the complaint).</i></li> </ul> <p><i>When this happens, we will take action to protect the health and wellbeing of our staff who have a right to do their jobs without fear of being abused or</i></p>
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				<i>harassed. We also consider the impact of the behaviour on our ability to do our work and provide a service to others. In such cases we will follow our Customer Warning Indicator Policy which may result in restricted contact measures; however, we will make every effort to resolve a resident's complaint. We will only limit a resident's contact with us in exceptional circumstances and after careful consideration.</i>
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	Our Warning Indicator Policy outlines how we meet these responsibilities. This policy offers residents a right to review. We also refer to this in section 12 of our <a href="#">complaints policy</a> .	See 5.14

### 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	Section 7 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> sets out our approach to handling complaints as early as possible.  Our Complaints <a href="#">eform</a> asks if the customer needs any additional support, reasonable adjustments or has any vulnerabilities that we should be aware of:  We train staff in effective and prompt complaint resolution.	From April 2024 we have increased resources to improve our capacity to respond to complaints more effectively and promptly.
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged,	Yes	This is set out in section 7 of our	We record on our NEC system the received date

	defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaint's procedure <b><u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u></b>		<p><a href="#">policy</a>, <a href="#">online</a> and in <a href="#">printed guides</a>.</p> <p>In 2023/24 we acknowledged our policy was to acknowledge complaints within 2 working days. We acknowledged 90.04% within 2 days, 7.15% after 2 days, and 2.81% did not receive an acknowledgement.</p> <p>We have amended our targets from April 2024 and have centralised the acknowledgement process.</p>	and the acknowledged date, and this performance is reported to our Board and BMBC. Our Customer Services Team monitor compliance.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <b><u>within 10 working days</u></b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	<p>This is set out in section 7 of our <a href="#">policy</a>, <a href="#">online</a> and in <a href="#">printed guides</a></p> <p>We report on complaints handling time and alignment with the code in our routine performance reports. These are shared with Board and BMBC. In 23/24 we responded to <b>57.44%</b> of Stage 1 complaints in 10 working days and so in 24/25 we have increased resources in the Customer Services Team to meet our duties.</p> <p>We publish a summary of <a href="#">complaint handling performance</a> on our website</p>	<p>In section 7 of our complaints policy, it states: <i>'We will post or email the response letter within 10 working days.'</i></p> <p><i>'The stage 1 response will contain:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The complaint stage.</i></li> <li>• <i>The details of the complaint (complaint definition).</i></li> <li>• <i>The decision on the complaint.</i></li> <li>• <i>The reasons for the decision/s.</i></li> <li>• <i>The details of any actions we will take to put things right including timescales for this.</i></li> <li>• <i>Details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the resident is not satisfied with the response.'</i></li> </ul>
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	Yes	<p>Section 7 of our <a href="#">policy</a> sets out how we deal with extensions to timescales.</p> <p>We aim to advise the resident at the earliest opportunity but at the latest 2 working days before the expected response time.</p>	In section 7 of the complaints policy, it states: <i>'There may be occasions when due to the complexity of the complaint, we need extra time to investigate. Should an extension to the standard timescale be needed we will inform the resident of this and the reasons. Where possible we aim to do this at least 2 working days before the deadline.'</i>

	the reason(s) must be clearly explained To the resident.		<p>Our acknowledgement letter templates have sections which clearly explain the extensions.</p> <p>We record extensions and audit the reasons, and report performance to our Board and BMBC.</p> <p>In 2023/24 needed to extend the 10 working day for 42.56%% of our Stage 1 complaints. We have now increased resources to improve the speed of complaint handling.</p>	<p><i>Any extension must be no more than a further 10 working days without good reason. If the extension is not acceptable with the resident, the resident can always contact the Housing Ombudsman to discuss this further. We will provide the resident with the Housing Ombudsman contact details in all complaint correspondence letters.'</i></p>
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>This is covered in section 7 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> Our confirmation of extension letter advises of this.</p>	<p>Section 7 of our complaints states: <i>'Any extension must be no more than a further 10 working days without good reason. If the extension is not acceptable with the resident, the resident can always contact the Housing Ombudsman to discuss this further. We will provide the resident with the Housing Ombudsman contact details in all complaint correspondence letters.'</i></p>
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>We state our approach in section 7 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a></p> <p>We log any outstanding actions and promises and monitor compliance through our 'promise tracker'</p> <p>Staff responsible for complaint handling receive training to ensure they understand this requirement.</p>	<p>In section 7 of the complaints policy, it states: <i>'We respond to a complaint when we know the answer to the complaint, not when we complete the actions required to address the issue.'</i></p> <p>From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 we include compliance in meeting outstanding actions in our performance reports</p>
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions,	Yes	<p>Section 7 of our <a href="#">complaints policy</a> sets out how we acknowledge and respond to complaints. We include all the</p>	<p>Section 7 of our complaints policy states: <i>'Our acknowledgement letter will contain the following:</i></p>



	referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.		<p>points to be addressed in our acknowledgement letter.</p> <p>Our Customer Services Team complete quality control checks on responses and we discuss the quality of complaint responses with our involved tenants at our Service Improvement Meetings.</p> <p>Staff responsible for complaint handling receive training to ensure they understand these requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The complaint stage.</li> <li>•Our understanding and definition of the complaint.</li> <li>•All aspects of the complaint we will investigate.</li> <li>•Any points we are excluding and the reasons why.</li> <li>•The outcome that the resident has told us that they are seeking.</li> <li>•Any reasonable adjustments we have mutually agreed.</li> <li>•The expected timescale in which we will respond.</li> <li>•How to contact the Housing Ombudsman if we are aiming to respond after 10 working days.</li> <li>•How we will keep the resident informed if we find that we are unlikely to respond in time.</li> <li>•How to contact the investigating officer.</li> <li>•The link to the complaints policy.</li> </ul> <p>The stage 1 response will contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The complaint stage.</li> <li>•The details of the complaint (complaint definition).</li> <li>•The decision on the complaint.</li> <li>•The reasons for the decision/s.</li> <li>•The details of any actions we will take to put things right including timescales for this.</li> <li>•Details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the resident is not satisfied with the response’.</li> </ul>
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>Section 7 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> explains how we manage additional or new information being shared by the resident during an ongoing Stage 1 investigation.</p> <p>Staff responsible for complaint handling receive training to ensure they understand these requirements.</p>	<p>In section 7 of the complaints policy, it states: <i>‘Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, we incorporate these into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued.</i></p> <p><i>Where we have issued the stage 1 response, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, we log the new issues as a new complaint.’</i></p>

6.9	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language:</p> <ol 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; and</li> <li>details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.</li> </ol>	Yes	<p>Section 7 of our <a href="#">Complaints Policy</a> sets out this requirement. Our Stage 1 response template and letters includes all this information in clear language.</p> <p>In 23/24 67% of complainants completing a <a href="#">satisfaction survey</a> found their response easy to understand. We share a random sample of anonymised responses with our involved tenants for them to assess the quality.</p> <p>Staff responsible for complaint handling receive training to ensure they understand these requirements.</p>	<p>Section 7 of our Complaints Policy states:</p> <p><i>'The stage 1 response will contain:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>•The complaint stage.</i></li> <li><i>•The details of the complaint (complaint definition).</i></li> <li><i>•The decision on the complaint.</i></li> <li><i>•The reasons for the decision/s.</i></li> <li><i>•The details of any actions we will take to put things right including timescales for this.</i></li> <li><i>•Details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the resident is not satisfied with the response'.</i></li> </ul>
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## Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.10	<p>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.</p>	Yes	<p>This is set out in Section 7 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a>, On our <a href="#">website</a> and In our <a href="#">printed guide</a></p> <p>All our Stage 2 responses contain advice about how to progress.</p>	<p>In section 7 of our complaints policy, we state:</p> <p><i>'If a resident is not satisfied with our response to their complaint at stage 1, they can request to escalate the complaint to stage 2. We encourage residents to let us know as soon as possible, but no later than 4 weeks from the date of the stage 1 response. We may apply discretion where the resident was unable to escalate the complaint earlier (for example health grounds) or where the complaint raises safeguarding or health and safety issues.'</i></p>
6.11	<p>Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at</p>	Yes	<p>Section 7 of our <a href="#">policy</a> sets out our timescales for acknowledging within 5</p>	<p>In section 7 of our complaints policy, we state:</p>

	<p>stage 2 of the complaint's procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.</p>		<p>working days. This is included in FAQs on our <a href="#">website</a> and our <a href="#">printed guide</a>.</p> <p>Our Customer Services Team monitor compliance and performance is reported to Board and BMBC</p>	<p><i>'When a resident asks us to escalate to stage 2, we will contact them to discuss their complaint further and acknowledge the complaint in writing within 5 working days.'</i></p> <p><i>'Our acknowledgement letter will contain the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>•The complaint stage.</i></li> <li><i>•Our understanding and definition of the complaint.</i></li> <li><i>•All aspects of the complaint we will investigate.</i></li> <li><i>•Any points we are excluding and the reasons why.</i></li> <li><i>•The outcome that the resident has told us that they are seeking.</i></li> <li><i>•Any reasonable adjustments we have mutually agreed.</i></li> <li><i>•The expected timescale in which we will respond.</i></li> <li><i>•How to contact the Housing Ombudsman if we are aiming to respond after 10 working days.</i></li> <li><i>•How we will keep the resident informed if we find that we are unlikely to respond in time.</i></li> <li><i>•How to contact the investigating officer.</i></li> <li><i>•The link to the complaints policy.</i></li> </ul> <p>Action – NEC being amended to ensure we can record and report on acknowledgement of Stage 2s</p>
6.12	<p>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.</p>	Yes	<p>Section 7 of our <a href="#">policy</a> sets out how we work with residents to understand their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration but we recognise that we cannot insist on the resident providing an explanation.</p>	<p>In section 7 of our complaints policy, we state:</p> <p><i>'We ask residents to tell us why they are dissatisfied with our stage 1 response. Some examples are below:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• The resident does not think we responded to the issues they raised in their complaint.</i></li> <li><i>• They do not agree with our decision at stage 1 of their complaint and the reasons for this.</i></li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The resident has new or relevant information that may change the decision we made in our stage 1 response.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>If we have tried to contact the resident to discuss the complaint further but have no response, or if the resident is unable to explain why they are not satisfied with the stage 1 response, we will investigate and review the complaint based on the information we have.'</i></p>
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Section 7 of our <a href="#">policy</a> sets out that a different person considers a complaint Stage 2. This section also outlines how we deal with conflict of interest.	In section 7 of our complaints policy, it states: <i>'The person investigating the complaint at stage 2 will not be the same person that investigated the complaint at stage 1.'</i>
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <b><u>within 20 working days</u></b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Section 7 of our <a href="#">Complaint Policy</a> sets out this target time.  In 2023/24 we responded to 70.58% of Stage 2s in 20 working days.  In April 2024 we increased resources to improve performance.	In section 7 of the complaints policy, we state: <i>'We will investigate the issues raised and provide a written response by post or email within 20 working days from the date of our acknowledgement.'</i>
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	Section 7 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> sets out this requirement. We aim to advise the resident at the earliest opportunity but at the latest 2 working days before the expected response time. Our acknowledgement letter templates have sections which clearly explain the extensions. We record extensions and audit the reasons, and report performance to our Board and BMBC. In 2023/24 we responded to 96.32%	In section 7 of the complaints policy, we state: <i>'There may be occasions when due to the complexity of the complaint, we need extra time to investigate. If we need an extension to the Stage 2 standard timescale, we will inform the resident of this and the reasons, where possible at least 2 working days before the response is due. Any extension must be no more than a further 20 working days without good reason. If the extension is not acceptable with the resident, the resident can always contact the Housing Ombudsman to discuss this further. We will provide the resident with the Housing Ombudsman contact details in all</i>

			of Stage 2s in time including extensions. In April 2024 we increased resources to improve performance.	<i>complaint correspondence letters.'</i>
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	Section 7 of our <a href="#">Complaint Policy</a> sets out this requirement. Our confirmation of extension letter advises of this.	In section 7 of the complaints policy, we state: <i>'There may be occasions when due to the complexity of the complaint, we need extra time to investigate. If we need an extension to the Stage 2 standard timescale, we will inform the resident of this and the reasons, where possible at least 2 working days before the response is due. Any extension must be no more than a further 20 working days without good reason. If the extension is not acceptable with the resident, the resident can always contact the Housing Ombudsman to discuss this further. We will provide the resident with the Housing Ombudsman contact details in all complaint correspondence letters.'</i>
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	Section 7 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> confirms this approach. We log any outstanding actions and promises and monitor compliance through our 'promise tracker'  From 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2024 we include compliance in meeting outstanding actions in our performance reports.	In section 7 of our complaints policy, we state:  <i>'We respond to a complaint when we know the answer to the complaint, not when we complete the actions required to address the issue.'</i>
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	Section 7 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> sets out how we acknowledge and respond to complaints. We include all the points to be addressed in our acknowledgement letter.  Our Customer Services Team complete quality control checks on	<i>The stage 2 response will contain:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The complaint stage.</i></li> <li>• <i>The details of the complaint (complaint definition).</i></li> <li>• <i>The decision on the complaint.</i></li> <li>• <i>The reasons for any decisions we have made.</i></li> </ul>

			<p>responses and we discuss the quality of complaint responses with our involved tenants at regular complaint review meetings.</p> <p>Staff responsible for complaint handling receive training to ensure they understand these requirements. All stage 2s are reviewed by an Executive Director or Head of Service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The details of any actions we will take to put things right including timescales for this.</i></li> <li>• <i>Details of how the resident can escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>We respond to a complaint when we know the answer to the complaint, not when we complete the actions required to address the issue.'</i></p>
6.19	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language:</p> <p>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 Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.</p>	Yes	<p>Our Stage 2 response template and letters includes all this information in clear language.</p> <p>In 23/24 67% of complainants completing a <a href="#">satisfaction survey</a> found their response easy to understand. We share a random sample of anonymised responses with our involved tenants for them to assess the quality.</p> <p>Staff responsible for complaint handling receive training to ensure they understand these requirements.</p>	<p>Section 7 of our <a href="#">complaints policy</a> states:</p> <p><i>'The stage 2 response will contain:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•<i>The complaint stage.</i></li> <li>•<i>The details of the complaint (complaint definition).</i></li> <li>•<i>The decision on the complaint.</i></li> <li>•<i>The reasons for any decisions we have made.</i></li> <li>•<i>The details of any actions we will take to put things right including timescales for this.</i></li> <li>•<i>Details of how the resident can escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>We respond to a complaint when we know the answer to the complaint, not when we complete the actions required to address the issue.'</i></p>
6.20	<p>Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.</p>	Yes	<p>Section 7 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> makes it clear that a Stage 2 response is our final response. Before Stage 2 complaint response is issued, we hold a review meeting with the investigating team, the relevant Head of Service and/or Executive Director. This ensures thoroughness</p>	<p>Section 7 of our complaints policy states:</p> <p><i>'In most cases, it is the Customer Services Team who will lead the investigation on behalf of the Executive Management Team. An Executive Director or Head of Service is responsible for the final response at Stage 2.</i></p> <p><i>Our final response to the resident will be in writing</i></p>

			and reasonableness of this final response.	<i>and will be the end of our complaint's procedure. After a complaint has gone through both stages of our complaint's procedure, and if the resident remains dissatisfied, they can complain to the Housing Ombudsman.'</i>
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## 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"> <li>• Apologising.</li> <li>• Acknowledging where things have gone wrong.</li> <li>• Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons.</li> <li>• Taking action if there has been delay.</li> <li>• Reconsidering or changing a decision.</li> <li>• Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum.</li> <li>• Providing a financial remedy.</li> <li>• Changing policies, procedures or practices.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>Section 8 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> details all of these remedies and these are summarised on our <a href="#">website</a></p> <p>From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 we have made plans to amend out IT systems to record individual/multiple remedies against each complaint.</p> <p>Our compensation policy supports our approach to putting things right.</p>	<p>In section 8 of our complaints policy, it states:</p> <p><i>'Where something has gone wrong, we will acknowledge this within the response letter and set out the actions we have taken or intend to take to put things right.</i></p> <p><i>These can be one or more of the following remedies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Apologising.</i></li> <li>• <i>Acknowledging where things have gone wrong.</i></li> <li>• <i>Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons.</i></li> <li>• <i>Taking action if there has been a delay.</i></li> <li>• <i>Reconsidering or changing a decision.</i></li> <li>• <i>Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum.</i></li> <li>• <i>Providing a financial remedy.</i></li> <li>• <i>Changing policies, procedures, or practices.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Any remedy we offer will reflect the impact the failing has had on the resident.</i></p> <p><i>In our response we will set out what will happen and by when and we will, where appropriate, agree this with the resident.</i></p>

				<i>Where we are offering financial remedy, we will follow our Compensation Policy which we have developed in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman remedies guidance.'</i>
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Section 8 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> sets out that any remedy will reflect the impact on a resident where any fault is identified. Our compensation policy sets out our approach Staff responsible for complaint handling receive training to ensure they understand these requirements.	In section 8 of our complaints policy, it states:  <i>'Any remedy we offer will reflect the impact the failing has had on the resident.'</i>  The compensation policy is being updated and subject to approval in July 2024.
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	Section 8 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> meets this requirement. We record remedies and action on our NEC system and track progress. From 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2024 we will include progress on "promises" in our performance reports. These are shared with our Board and BMBC and summaries published online. Our involved customers quality checks an anonymised range of stage 2 responses and offered remedies.	Section 8 of our complaints policy states: <i>'Any remedy we offer will reflect the impact the failing has had on the resident. In our response we will set out what will happen and by when and we will, where appropriate, agree this with the resident.'</i>
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	Section 8 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> sets out our approach. We have a compensation policy which is currently being updated and scheduled for approval in July 2024. Our range of remedies has been developed taking account of guidance from the Housing Ombudsman.	<i>See 7.1 above.</i>



## 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> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman.</li> <li>the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints.</li> <li>any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and</li> <li>any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.</li> </ol>	Yes	<p>Section 9 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> sets out how we report performance aligned to the code and Section 11 sets out our approach to self-assessment .</p> <p>Our <a href="#">2023/24 annual complaint handling report</a> is on our website along with a <a href="#">response</a> from The Member Responsible for Complaints and our Board Complaint Champion.</p> <p>For the 2024/25 period we have reviewed our reporting framework to align fully to the new code requirements.</p> <p>We publish a <a href="#">summary</a> of our performance online which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>complaints performance data.</li> <li>results from complaint surveys; and</li> <li>a summary of service improvements.</li> </ul>	<p>Section 9 of our complaints policy states: <i>'We report on continuous learning and actions to address learning from complaints n following ways:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>•Residents through regular updates on our website, social media and in our annual reports.</i></li> <li><i>•Involved residents through our Service Improvement Panel Group which meets every 3 months and our Tenant Voice Panel on an annual basis.</i></li> <li><i>•Staff through regular team brief updates and training.</i></li> <li><i>•Executive Management Team, Board, Customer Service Committee and the Council through sharing our quarterly performance reports which includes key performance indicators and learning. The response from Customer Services Committee is published on our website.</i></li> <li><i>•The Council through quarterly update reports at Service Agreement Core Group Meetings. This is a meeting of senior executives of Berneslai Homes and BMBC. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure Berneslai Homes is delivering services in line with the requirements of our contract.</i></li> <li><i>•The Council and involved tenants at the ALMO Strategic Liaison meeting. This meeting is attended by BMBC and the Cabinet Spokesperson for Regeneration and Culture (Member Responsible for Complaints) and considers Berneslai Homes performance against our strategic objectives. It enables tenants to have a direct</i></li> </ul>

			<p><i>dialogue with their landlord on key issues including complaint handling performance and learning from complaints.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>•The Council through specific complaint handling and learning reports to Cabinet. The response from MRC is published on our website.</i></li></ul> <p>Section 11 of our complaints policy states: <b>'Self-Assessment against the Complaint Handling Code</b> <i>We will complete and submit our self-assessment annually to the Ombudsman to ensure that our Complaints Policy and performance remains in line with the requirements of the code. We will also conduct a review of the self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in our procedures.</i> <i>We will publish our self-assessment on our website by 30<sup>th</sup> June each year and we will also include a response to our self-assessment from our Board and BMBC.</i></p> <p><b>Monitoring complaint handling</b> <i>The Customer Services Team monitor complaint performance on a routine basis as follows:</i> <i>Daily monitoring of complaints nearing their expected completion dates.</i> <i>Monthly review of a proportion of closed complaints to assess quality and ensure learning has been identified.</i> <i>Monthly assessment of performance reports including resident satisfaction and tracking that we have fulfilled complaint resolutions.</i></p> <p><b>Reporting, publishing and governance of complaint handling performance</b> <i>The Customer Services Team produce complaint</i></p>
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			<p><i>performance reports every three months and the last report in the financial year is an annual complaints performance and service improvement report.</i></p> <p><i>A summary of these reports is published on our website.</i></p> <p><i>The quarterly reports are reported to our Senior and Executive Management Teams, Customer Service Committee and BMBC via the Services Agreement Core Group and the ALMO Strategic Liaison Meeting (see section 9 for more information about these meetings). This ensures oversight and scrutiny from our governing body, landlord BMBC and residents who are part of our formal engagement process.</i></p> <p><i>The annual complaints performance and service improvement report is reported to our Senior Management Team, Executive Management Team, our Board and to the BMBC Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC). BMBC Cabinet also receive an annual complaint report or more frequent if required.</i></p> <p><i>We publish this report in the complaints section of our website, along with a response from our Board and BMBC.</i></p> <p><i>These reports will contain:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• A qualitative and quantitative analysis of our complaint handling performance including trends in complaints. This will also include a summary of the types of complaints we have refused to accept.</i></li><li><i>• Analysis of resident satisfaction with our complaint handling service.</i></li><li><i>• Information about service improvements identified and made as a result of learning</i></li></ul>
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				<p><i>from complaints.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any annual report about our performance from the Ombudsman.</li> <li>• Any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to our work.</li> </ul>
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 section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes	Our annual complaint performance and service improvement report for 2023/24 was reported to our Customer <a href="#">Services Committee 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024</a> and to <a href="#">BMBC Cabinet 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024</a> . The reports are on our website along with our Board and BMBC MRC's response.	See 8.1 for more information about how we publish performance and service improvement information.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	There is no merger, restructure or change planned.	
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	In 2023/24 we received 22 judgements from the Housing Ombudsman Service but we were not required to update our former self-assessment.	We commit to update our self-assessment where asked to do so by the Housing Ombudsman.
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	<p>We have resilience and business continuity plans for our Complaint Handling Service. These plans include communication with residents and the HOS.</p> <p>Section 11 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> includes a section highlighting our approach if we became unable to comply due to exceptional circumstances.</p>	<p>In section 11 of our complaints policy, it states: <i>'If we are unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, we will inform the Ombudsman, provide information to individual residents who may be affected, and publish this on our website. We will also provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.'</i></p> <p>Our website, social media pages and in queue messages would be updated in the event of</p>

			exceptional circumstances .
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## 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	<p>Section 9 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> references how we learn from complaints.</p> <p>We issue a learning review to lead officers on the close of complaints</p> <p>We have a small Service Improvement Team who undertake independent review and who monitor trends and service improvement progress.</p> <p>We share learning with residents in their response letters.</p> <p>We publish learning in our <a href="#">performance reports</a> and on <a href="#">our website</a> and share these with or governing body (Board and <a href="#">BMBC</a>)</p>	<p>In section 9 of our complaints policy, we state: <i>'At the closure of each complaint the investigating officer is responsible for reviewing the complaint, looking beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint to identify any learning.'</i></p> <p><i>The investigating officer will complete a 'Service Improvement Review Form' to record any learning and actions.'</i></p>
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	<p>As 9.1 above</p> <p>We deliver complaint handling training to all staff.</p> <p>Learning from complaints is a standard agenda item for SMT and EMT meetings and learning is included in our complaint reports.</p>	<p>In section 9 of our complaints policy, we state: <i>'We promote a positive complaint handling culture. We encourage staff to use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.'</i></p>
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint	Yes	Section 11 of our <a href="#">policy</a> sets out our performance monitoring and	Section 11 of our complaints policy, it states:

	<p>handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.</p>		<p>transparency arrangements.</p> <p>Four times a year we share learning and trends with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our Customer Services Committee</li> <li>• Our Tenant Complaint Panel</li> <li>• Publish <a href="#">online</a></li> <li>• Our stakeholder BMBC</li> <li>• We share learning with staff through our team briefs.</li> <li>• Our governing body BMBC consider complaint handling performance and learning at cabinet at least annually.</li> </ul>	<p><i>'The Customer Services Team produce complaint performance reports every three months and the last report in the financial year is an annual complaints performance and service improvement report.</i></p> <p><i>A summary of these reports is published on our website.</i></p> <p><i>The quarterly reports are reported to our Senior and Executive Management Teams, Customer Service Committee and BMBC via the Services Agreement Core Group and the ALMO Strategic Liaison Meeting (see section 9 for more information about these meetings). This ensures oversight and scrutiny from our governing body, landlord BMBC and residents who are part of our formal engagement process.</i></p> <p><i>The annual complaints performance and service improvement report is reported to our Senior Management Team, Executive Management Team, our Board and to the BMBC Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC). BMBC Cabinet also receive an annual complaint report or more frequent if required.</i></p> <p><i>We publish this report in the complaints section of our website, along with a response from our Board and BMBC.'</i></p>
9.4	<p>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,</p>	Yes	<p>Section 4 of Our <a href="#">Complaints Policy</a> sets out Role &amp; Responsibilities in respect of this policy and our approach to complaint handling. Our Head of Customer Services has accountability for complaint</p>	<p>Section 4 of our complaints policy states:</p> <p><i>'Our Head of Customer Services is the Lead Officer with responsibility for complaint handling and compliance with the Housing Ombudsman</i></p>

	serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.		<p>handling. As set out in 9.3 above, they and their team ensure any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.</p> <p>Berneslai Homes SMT and EMT have shared responsibility for ensuring compliance and learning aligned to the HOS code.</p>	<p><i>Code.</i></p> <p><i>Our Senior and Executive Management Team have shared responsibility for ensuring their service areas handle complaints in line with this policy and the Housing Ombudsman Code. They have responsibility for ensuring resolutions are delivered effectively and their service responds to any learning. They have authority to issue the final Stage 2 response to complaints.</i></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	<p>A Board Member fulfils this role for the ALMO and they attend the resident service improvement panel to ensure positive complaint handling culture and meet with the Customer Services team to fulfil their role. They ensure that our Customer Services Committee receive regular reports regarding complaint handling. They have an agreed terms of reference which is published on our website. <a href="#">The Terms of Reference for the ALMO Complaint champion</a> were approved by Customer Services Committee 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024</p> <p>BMBC has appointed a Member responsible for Complaints and they have agreed <a href="#">terms of reference</a>. This is the Cabinet Spokesperson for Regeneration and Culture. They receive reports and information from the Customer Services Team, and these are considered at Services Core Group. BMBC Cabinet receive performance and</p>	<p>Section 4 of our <a href="#">complaints policy</a> states:</p> <p><i>'Governing Body Roles and Responsibilities Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)</i></p> <p><i>The BMBC Cabinet Spokesperson for Regeneration and Culture has lead responsibility for governance of and assurance that our complaint policy and practice align to the Housing Ombudsman Code. They receive and respond to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>•our annual self-assessment against the code;</i></li> <li><i>and</i></li> <li><i>•our quarterly performance and learning reports.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>They do not respond to individual complaints. Their assurance response to our annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Code, and any other formal response in respect of complaint handling performance and learning is published on our website.</i></p> <p><i>Board and Customer Service Committee</i></p>

			<p>learning reports to ensure complete transparency and compliance. Their role was approved at <a href="#">BMBC Cabinet</a> 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024.</p>	<p><i>Members</i></p> <p><i>Customer Services Committee and Board have organisational responsibility for governance of and assurance that our complaint policy and practice align to the Housing Ombudsman Code. They receive and respond to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>•our annual self-assessment against the code;</i></li> <li><i>and</i></li> <li><i>•our quarterly performance and learning reports.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>We have a Board Complaint Handling Champion who supports officers and residents in ensuring we have a positive complaint handling culture.</i></p> <p><i>They do not respond to individual complaints. Their assurance response to our annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Code, and any other formal response in respect of complaint handling performance and learning is published on our website.'</i></p>
9.6	<p>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.</p>	Yes	<p>A Board Member fulfils this role for the ALMO They ensure that our Customer Services Committee receive regular reports regarding complaint handling. <a href="#">This is their terms of reference.</a> BMBC has appointed a Member responsible for Complaints and they have agreed <a href="#">terms of reference.</a> This is the Cabinet Spokesperson for regeneration and culture. They receive reports and information from the Customer Services Team, and these are considered at Services Core Group. BMBC Cabinet receive performance and learning reports to ensure complete</p>	



			transparency and compliance.	
9.7	<p>As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance.</li> <li>b) regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling.</li> <li>c) regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and</li> <li>d) annual complaints performance and service improvement report.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>Section 11 of our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> sets out how we share information with the MRC and our Board.</p> <p>The quarterly reports are reported to our Senior and Executive Management Teams, Customer Service Committee and BMBC via the Services Core Group meetings. This ensures oversight and scrutiny from our governing body and landlord BMBC.</p> <p>The annual complaints performance and service improvement report is reported to our Senior Management Team, Executive Management Team, our Board and to the BMBC Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC). BMBC Cabinet also receive an annual complaint report or more frequent if required. <a href="#">The 2023/24 Report was presented to Customer Services Committee 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024</a> and to <a href="#">BMBC Cabinet 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024</a>. A <a href="#">summary of the report</a> is published on our website</p>	
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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments.</li> <li>b) take collective responsibility for</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>Our <a href="#">complaint policy</a> (section 13) sets out our objective in relation to complaint handling and this is relevant across our company, within BMBC and our wider partnerships/contracts/third parties:</p> <p>Where a complaint crosses different teams or organisations, we will ensure one response is sent and where necessary hold a cross-party review</p>	<p><i>Section 13 States:</i></p> <p><i>"We ensure that the training clearly promotes our standard objectives in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties and reflects the following needs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>To have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments.</i></li> </ul>

	<p>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>		<p>meeting.</p> <p>Evidence also includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• our standard contracts</li> <li>• Comms to staff</li> <li>• Our induction and training material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>To take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others.</i></li> <li>• <i>To act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.'</i></li> </ul>
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