

Committee: Cabinet

Date: Thursday, 20
October 2022

Title: Self Assessment Independent Housing
Ombudsman Scheme Complaints Code

**Portfolio
Holder:** Councillor Arthur Coote, Portfolio Holder for
Housing

**Report
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Summary

1. The Independent Housing Ombudsman Schemes (IHOS) Complaints Code was introduced in July 2020. The Code sets out good practice that the Ombudsman expects social landlords to follow. The Code has been updated and takes effect on 1 April 2022 and Landlords have until 1 October 2022 to become compliant.
2. Landlords must carry out an annual assessment against the Code to ensure their complaint handling remains in line with the Ombudsman's requirements and publish the results. There is no longer a requirement to send the self assessment to the IHOS.
3. The Code is also a useful guide for tenants to understand what they can and should expect from their landlord.
4. The Self Assessment will be considered at the Tenants Panel meeting on the 22 September 2022.
5. Members will note there are a number of both mandatory (must comply) and best practice (should comply) requirements that either the Council do not comply or partially comply with currently.
6. Officers are working to achieve full compliance by the end of the calendar year when a further update will be provided to Housing Board.

Recommendations

7. To approve the Self Assessment of the Independent Housing Ombudsman's Scheme Complaints Handling Code.

Financial Implications

8. The Council will need to undertake a review of resources in order to comply with IHOS Complaints Code.

Background Papers

The self assessment of the IHOS Complaints Code is attached to the report as Appendix 1.

9. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report:

- The IHOS Complaints Code

Impact

10.

Communication/Consultation	Tenant Panel on 22 September 2022
Community Safety	Not applicable
Equalities	Accessibility and awareness has been assessed as part of the self assessment
Health and Safety	Compliance with the Code will enable more openness, transparency and learning, encouraging tenants to come forward with any health and safety concerns
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Compliance with the complaints code will become a regulatory requirement
Sustainability	Not applicable
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	Review of resources to oversee and lead complaints and training to complaint responders in IHOS good practice

Situation

11. Ideally the Council should have achieved full compliance with the IHOS Complaints Code by 1 October 2022. This will not be possible and the earliest we could achieve that goal will be 30 December 2022.

Risk Analysis

12.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Compliance with the IHOS	2 - the Council will not be	2 - There is some risk of	Officers are working to achieve full

Complaints Code will become a Regulator for Social Housing requirement when the new consumer regulations become mandatory next year. In the meantime Social Landlords are being encouraged to follow the proposed consumer regulations.	compliant by 1 October 2022, and officers have earmarked the 30 December 2022 as the earliest date for full compliance.	challenge but the impact is low as long as Council is working towards full compliance with the Code by the end of the calendar year.	compliance by the end of the calendar year when a further update will be provided to Housing Board.
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.