

## 1.1 Appendix A: Self-assessment form


This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer, and it must be reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body at least annually.

Once approved, landlords must publish the self-assessment as part of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report on their website. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.

Landlords are required to complete the self-assessment in full and support all statements with evidence, with additional commentary as necessary.

We recognise that there may be a small number of circumstances where landlords are unable to meet the requirements, for example, if they do not have a website. In these circumstances, we expect landlords to deliver the intentions of the Code in an alternative way, for example by publishing information in a public area so that it is easily accessible.

## Section 1: Definition of a complaint


Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation/improvement actions
1.2	<p>A complaint must be defined as:</p> <p><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></p>		<p>The Council’s definition is published on the website <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a></p> <p><a href="#">The definition is also included in the Complaints Policy:</a></p> <p><a href="#">Uttlesford Housing Complaints Policy 2023</a>  <a href="#">The Council has a published Complaints Leaflet. The leaflet does not include the definition.</a></p>  <p>Complaints leaflet 2024.pdf</p>	<p>The policy and website explain the definition of a complaint.</p> <p>The Council sent a copy of the complaints leaflet to the Housing Ombudsman who approved its contents. Improvements would be to add the definition of a complaint to the leaflet when it is next reviewed.</p>
1.3	<p>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</p>	Yes	<p>Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a></p>	<p>We will be rolling out training for all relevant Council staff on the requirements of the new statutory code. This will include asking residents who express dissatisfaction whether they wish to raise a complaint.</p>

	handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.			All 3 <sup>rd</sup> party complaints are accepted.
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	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>	When it is obviously a request for service and not a complaint it is forwarded to the correct department for action. When it is not obvious, we check with the complainant if they are looking to raise a complaint or a request for service. As part of the complaints training all staff will be taught to recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. Currently service requests are not recorded however this will be incorporated into the review of Northgate/NEC.
1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling	Yes	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>	We always aim to resolve service requests even if there is an ongoing complaint.

	of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.			We will ensure that service requests are being carried out alongside complaint investigations as part of the weekly complaint review meetings.
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	Our TSM's were carried out by a third party via telephone, who take forward any complaints for requests for service. This enabled us to deal with any complaints very quickly, those with red flags, amber and green accordingly.	All in-house surveys will in future include reference to how to complain and details of the Ombudsman service.

## Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation/improvement actions
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	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>	All key staff to complete appropriate in-house and Ombudsman training so they are aware of valid reasons for refusing a complaint.
2.2	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.</li> </ul>	Yes	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>	The policy will be reviewed to include these specific exclusions as set out in 2.2

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>			
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	Yes	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>	We consider all complaints on an individual basis including those raised more than 12 months after the issue occurring.
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and	Yes	 Complaints - Non Complaint Letter.pdf	The Council has a template letter for not accepting a complaint. This makes reference to the resident being able to refer the matter to the Ombudsman if they are





	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.			not satisfied with the Council's decision. An officer to discuss the complaint with the resident to check all issues have been raised and possible actions fully explored.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>	We consider all complaints on an individual basis.



### Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness



Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation/improvement actions
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must	Yes	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>  <a href="#">Equality Policy (PDF) [1MB]</a>	More information on how to complain has been added to Housing News, complaints feature on the front page of the website. Complaints can be made

	<p>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.</p>			<p>by telephone, email, in person or any reasonable form of communication. Where there is a need, we will visit a resident to discuss a complaint.</p> <p>Complaints are taken and actively encouraged at regular sheltered housing residents' meetings.</p> <p>There is a dedicated email box for complaints. This enables them to be directed to the appropriate officer efficiently.</p> <p>Uttlesford District Council believes that no person should be treated unfairly and is committed to eliminate all forms of discrimination. We do this by complying with our Equality Policy which sets out the Council's aims and objectives for treating everyone equally.</p>
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<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>	<div style="text-align: center;">  Ombudsman Training - Dec 2022.pdf  Applying Dispute Resolutions - Ombud  Housing Ombudsman - Know </div>	<p>Housing staff have had instruction on the complaints process and how to advise tenants wishing to make a complaint and who to pass complaints to. Key staff have completed Ombudsman training</p> <p>In the complaints training programme being developed, this will include refreshing staff on the Council's published complaints process.</p> <p>An improvement would be to add complaints discussion to team meeting agendas.</p>
<p>3.3</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  TSM - Report 23-24.pdf </div>	<p>Complaints are logged and recorded and submitted on monthly pulse surveys on HouseMark.</p> <p>TSM results can also be benchmarked.</p>

				<p>Complaint stats are recorded across the Council and presented to Senior Management.</p> <p>In the new training programme, we will reinforce the message that complaints should be seen as a positive rather than a negative.</p>
3.4	<p>Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two-stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.</p>	Yes	<p>Complaints policy can be found here:  <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a></p>  <p>Complaints leaflet 2024.pdf</p>	<p>The Council widely publishes its complaints policy. The complaints policy is available on the website, housing news, leaflet in sign up packs. Improvement – add to Facebook account.</p>
3.5	<p>The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.</p>	Yes	<p>Complaints policy can be found here:  <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a></p>  <p>Complaints leaflet 2024.pdf</p>	<p>Policy contains information about how to contact the Ombudsman.</p>

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>Complaints policy can be found here:  <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a></p>	The Council's policy specifically addresses 3 <sup>rd</sup> party complaints.
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>Complaints policy can be found here:  <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">         Complaints leaflet        2024.pdf     </div> <div style="text-align: center;">         Complaints - Stage 1        Response - Letterhear     </div> </div>	Complaint letters and leaflet outline how to contact the Ombudsman at any point during the complaint investigation.

## Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff



Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation/improvement actions
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	Specific officer corresponds with the Ombudsman and tracks all stage 1 and 2 complaints to ensure they are allocated to the appropriate officer and replies are sent out within the specified timeframe.	Uttlesford District Council is a small Council. There is a specific officer dedicated to co-ordinating and monitoring complaints with regular weekly meetings including key frontline service representatives. The same representatives attend each meeting to ensure consistency.
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	 Housing Ombudsman - Know  Applying Dispute Resolutions - Ombuds  Ombudsman Training - Dec 2022.pdf	The officer overseeing complaints has access to staff both senior and junior to be able to deal efficiently with complaints. They have carried out the online Ombudsman training. Weekly meetings held with relevant officers led by complaints officer.

<p>4.3</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Partial</p>	 <p>Ombudsman Training - Dec 2022.pdf    Applying Dispute Resolutions - Ombud: Housing Ombudsman - Know</p>	<p>Key staff have completed the Ombudsman training, but further training is required as roles and responsibilities for responding to complaints has changed. Where there are learning outcomes from complaints these are discussed at team meetings. Where appropriate, changes are made to service provision on the basis of learning outcomes from complaints.</p>
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## Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process


Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation/improvement actions
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	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>	We have a single policy in place for all complainants.
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	Yes	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>	We have a 2-stage policy.

	unnecessary confusion.			
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>	We have a 2-stage policy.
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		Where a complaint is about a contractor, we consult with the contractor as part of the complaint investigation process.

5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes		The Council maintains the responsibility for investigating and responding to all complaints so we can ensure that they are dealt in line with the Code.
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	 Complaints - Stage 1 Response - Letterhear	<p>The acknowledgement letters and stage 1 response letter clearly set out what the complaint is and what the resident is seeking as an outcome.</p> <p>We will ensure stage 2 letters contain this information.</p> <p>We regularly contact residents to ensure we understand the complaints especially where there is not complete clarity on the reason for the complaint and what the complainant would like as a resolution.</p>
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be	Yes	 Complaints - Acknowledgement lett	This is defined in the letters.



	<p>clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.</p>		<p>Complaints policy can be found here:  <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a></p>	
<p>5.8</p>	<p>At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind.</li> <li>b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position.</li> <li>c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and</li> <li>d. consider all relevant information and</li> </ul>	<p>Yes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">   Complaints - Stage 1  Response - Letterhea </p>	<p>Our template letters set out the complaints as we understand it so that the tenants can agree that we are clear on what their complaint is.</p> <p>We also state who will be dealing with the complaint.</p> <p>Staff who respond to complaints will be required to complete Ombudsman's online training.</p> <p>All necessary measures are taken to ensure there is no conflict of interest with those who are responding to complaints.</p>

	evidence carefully.			
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	<p>Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a></p>  <p>Complaints - Extension Letter.pdf</p>	When it is necessary to take longer than the specified timeframes to respond to a complaint, a letter is sent to the resident requesting an extension.
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any	Yes	<p>Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a></p> <p><a href="#">Equality Policy (PDF) [1MB]</a></p>	We will make adjustments to ensure fair access to the service. Such as large font used for responses. Improvement – records to be kept of where reasonable adjustments have been made.

	agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.			
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.	Yes	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>  <a href="#">Abusive, persistent or vexatious complaints policy - Uttlesford District Council</a>	We would refuse to escalate a complaint where a complainant reaches the criteria of a vexatious complainant, as defined in the Council's Abusive, Persistent or Vexatious complainants Policy.
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	Documents saved on internal document management system. Complaint spreadsheet accessible to all key staff.	All documents are saved to the house file on the Councils document management system.  We also log all complaint details on a complaints log spreadsheet.

	correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.			
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	We actively seek to remedy all complaints at the earliest available opportunity. We monitor this using the complaints log.	If it becomes clear that a remedy is readily available to resolve a complaint this be in enacted even if the complaint process continues.
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable	Yes	<a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/6312/Abusive-persistent-or-vexatious-complaints-policy">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/6312/Abusive-persistent-or-vexatious-complaints-policy</a>	If it becomes necessary to put restrictions in place, we will reference the Abusive, persistent or vexatious complaints policy.


	behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.			
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	<a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/6312/Abusive-persistent-or-vexatious-complaints-policy">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/6312/Abusive-persistent-or-vexatious-complaints-policy</a>	Proportionate action will always be taken.

## Section 6: Complaints Stages


### Stage 1


Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation/improvement actions
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	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>	<p>We endeavour to resolve all complaints at stage 1 without requesting an extension.</p> <p>The complaints log records the dates that complaints are responded to, showing that some are completed in as timely a manner as possible. We actively encourage colleagues across the service to respond to and resolve complaints as soon as practicably possible. We will include this in the complaints training programme to reinforce the message.</p>

6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <b><u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u></b>	Yes	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>  The Complaints log	<p>This is in done in line with the Code and the Council's complaints policy.</p> <p>The weekly complaints management meeting goes through each open complaint and reviews progress with relevant officers. Officers are asked to explain where complaints have gone out of time. Also, the complaints officer sends reminders where a milestone in the complaints process is soon going to go out of time.</p>
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	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>  The Complaints log	This is in done in line with the Code and the Council's complaints policy.

6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	<p>Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a></p> <p>The Complaints log</p>	This is in done in line with the Code and the Council's complaints policy.
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	<p>Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a></p>  <p>Complaints - Extension Letter.pdf</p>	Informed at all stages of Ombudsman details.
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	Yes	<p>Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a></p>	Outstanding actions will be detailed in response letters, and these are noted on the Complaints Log so that they can continue to be tracked.





	promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.			
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	<p>Complaints policy can be found here:  <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a></p>  <p>Complaints - Stage 1 Response - Letterhear</p>	Response letters state how the decisions have been made.
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>Complaints policy can be found here:  <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a></p>	<p>Where secondary matters are raised the complaints, officer will consider whether these need to be added to the complaint or a secondary complaint raised.</p> <p>The officer monitoring complaints will seek a second opinion whether a new complaint needs to be logged.</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the complaint stage.</li> <li>b. the complaint definition;</li> <li>c. the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>d. the reasons for any decisions made;</li> <li>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</li> <li>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</li> <li>g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.</li> </ul>	Yes	 <p>Complaints - Stage 1 Response - Letterhead</p>	<p>Template letters are used and cover all the bullet points .</p>
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Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation/improvement actions
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6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>	Stage 1 letters state that if residents are not happy with the outcome, they may escalate to a stage 2 complaint.
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>	This is done in line with the Code and the Council's complaints policy.
6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>	Our policy currently does ask complainants to give some explanation as to why they remain unsatisfied. This is to ensure that the Stage 2 response can fully cover all matters. We will change the way the policy is phrased to read that we will say it may be helpful to us to understand the reason for the complainant to request the complaint is escalated to stage 2.

6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>	Stage 2 complaints are escalated to the more senior manager as detailed in Stage 1 response letter.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <b>within 20 working days</b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>	We currently aim for 10 working days.
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	 Complaints - Extension Letter.pdf	Reason outlined in correspondence to resident.
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact	Yes	 Complaints - Extension Letter.pdf	The Ombudsman details are provided at all stages.

	details of the Ombudsman.			
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	Outstanding actions are outlined in the complaint response, so they are clear.	Outstanding actions will be detailed in response letters, and these are noted on the spreadsheet so that they can continue to be tracked.
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	Complaints policy can be found here: <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7939/Complaints-compliments-and-feedback-on-housing-repairs</a>	Reasons and justifications are provided in response letters.
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition;	Yes	 Complaints - Stage 2 Response - Letterhear	Template letters are used and cover all the bullet points.

	<p>c. the decision on the complaint;</p> <p>d. the reasons for any decisions made;</p> <p>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</p> <p>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</p> <p>g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.</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>Senior managers investigating complaints will consult with all appropriate staff.</p>	<p>Investigated and responded to be by Senior Officer at Service Manager Level or above.</p>

### Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation/improvement actions
7.1	<p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already</p>	Yes	<p>Template letters are used and cover all the bullet points.</p>	<p>Where fault is found it is acknowledged and apologised for and</p>

	<p>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>			<p>rectification completed as soon as possible.</p> <p>Compensation is paid where appropriate. A new compensation policy in line with the Ombudsman compensation policy is currently being developed.</p> <p>Learning from complaints is discussed at team meetings.</p>
7.2	<p>Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.</p>	No	<p>We cannot say we are compliant because we have not yet updated our compensation policy. We do not have a formal procedure in place to liaise with the resident to agree the remedy.</p>	<p>Compensation is paid in line with Housing Ombudsman policy. Formal Compensation policy being progressed. There will be a compensation framework for officers that will provide consistency on how we calculate and offer compensation payments. Residents consulted with to ensure the appropriate remedy is offered. This is not always financial.</p>

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.	Partial	Whilst we have a robust approach to holding staff to account for delivering the remedies, we need to improve how we agree the remedy with the resident (see 7.2 above).	Outstanding actions noted on the Complaints Log so that they can be tracked to completion. There is a weekly meeting at which officers are robustly held to account to deliver agreed actions, however, we need to improve how we arrive at the remedies.
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes		Compensation made in line with Ombudsman guidance. Policy being developed



## Section 8: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation/improvement actions
8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.</li> <li>b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept;</li> <li>c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;</li> <li>d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;</li> </ul>	No	<p>There is no composite annual complaints report, however, we report complaints performance on a quarterly basis to CMT.</p> <p>Self-assessment completed and published on website.  <a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/housing-Ombudsman-complaint-handling-code">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/housing-Ombudsman-complaint-handling-code</a></p>	<p>There is more work to do on collecting information which would enable the Council to learn from complaints and for service managers to be an essential part of this process. This will include creating an annual report on complaints. The first annual complaints report will be delivered by the end of September 2024.</p> <p>Quarterly statistics are provided to the Corporate Management Team and Cabinet; however, we recognise there is a need for a wider range of metrics to be reported, including learning from complaints.</p>

	<p>e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and</p> <p>f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.</p>			
8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	No	Our current arrangements for reporting complaints performance and activity do not meet the new requirement as set out in the Code.	The annual complaints report will be developed by the end of September 2024.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	<a href="https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/housing-Ombudsman-complaint-handling-code">https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/housing-Ombudsman-complaint-handling-code</a>	Annual self-assessment carried out and after policy changes.
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	N/A		We would if required to do so.
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	N/A		We would if this was an occurrence.

	affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.			
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## Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation/improvement actions
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.	Partial	N/A	Learning from complaints is currently done on an ad hoc basis at an operational level. We recognise the need to formalise our approach to this and create a framework adopted by all teams across the landlord service.
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	N/A	Officers approach complaints in a positive way, however, there is no formal framework for learning from complaints and as such we are unable to evidence this.
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	No	N/A	We report to Members, Senior Management and Tenant Panel complaints and any Ombudsman judgement. This is not formalised, so we are unable to evidence this but recognise the need to formalise our approach.

9.4	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, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Yes		Complaints are overseen by the Strategic Director for Housing.
9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').	No		To be appointed by the end of June 2024.
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	No		Once appointed.
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;	No		Once appointed.

	<p>b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;</p> <p>c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and</p> <p>d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.</p>			
9.8	<p>Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:</p> <p>a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</p> <p>b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and</p> <p>c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.</p>	Yes		<p>The Council as a whole works collaboratively on complaints that cross departments and where learning is identified that is cross departmental are discussed and implemented. This process needs to be formalised.</p>