

Appendix B – Self-Assessment Form

Grove Village Limited. Reviewed April 2023.

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

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

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

Section 1 - Definition of a complaint

Mandatory ‘must’ requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <i>‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.</i>	Yes	Detailed in our Complaints Policy section 6.2
1.3	The resident does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must still be handled in line with the landlord’s complaints policy.	Yes	All staff are aware of this and will record a complaint when a customer expresses dissatisfaction about a service failure. 3 rd Party and representative complaints are managed in line with policy and recorded in the same way.
1.6	... if further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter, or if the resident requests it, the issue must be logged as a complaint.	Yes	

1.7	A landlord must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so.	Yes	All complaints are recorded. Should a complaint not comply with policy, such as being raised when over 6 months old etc, we will write to the customer to explain and refer them to the Housing Ombudsman.
1.8	A complaints policy must clearly set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered, and these circumstances should be fair and reasonable to residents.	Yes	The complaint policy clearly states circumstances which are not considered under the policy.
1.9	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.	Yes	Should a complaint not comply with policy, such as being raised when over 6 months old etc, we will write to the customer to explain and refer them to the Housing Ombudsman.

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.4	Landlords should recognise the difference between a service request , where a resident may be unhappy with a situation that they wish to have rectified, and a complaint about the service they have/have not received.	Yes	Such dissatisfaction is recorded and managed.
1.5	Survey feedback may not necessarily need to be treated as a complaint, though, where possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue their dissatisfaction as a complaint if they wish to.	Yes	We will include reference to this in future survey designs so residents know how to report complaints.

Section 2 - Accessibility and awareness

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which residents can make a complaint such as in person, over the telephone, in writing, by email and digitally. While the Ombudsman recognises that it may not be feasible for a landlord to use all of the potential channels, there must be more than one route of access into the complaints system.	Yes	Complaints are accepted through all channels
2.3	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the number of stages involved, what will happen at each stage and the timeframes for responding.	Yes	Our Customer Feedback Policy and Service Standard will be made available on line.
2.4	Landlord websites, if they exist, must include information on how to raise a complaint. The complaints policy and process must be easy to find on the website.	Yes	All details on how to raise a complaint will be added on line.
2.5	Landlords must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and may need to adapt normal policies, procedures, or processes to accommodate an individual's needs. Landlords must satisfy themselves that their policy sets out how they will respond to reasonable adjustments requests in line with the Equality Act and that complaints handlers have had appropriate training to deal with such requests.	Yes	All policies are impact assessed to ensure compliance and complaint handlers are provided training on how they comply with any request.

2.6	Landlords must publicise the complaints policy and process, the Complaint Handling Code and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme in leaflets, posters, newsletters, online and as part of regular correspondence with residents.	Yes	The complaint policy is to be added online, we will look to include appropriate links to the Housing Ombudsmen.
2.7	Landlords must provide residents with contact information for the Ombudsman as part of its regular correspondence with residents.	Yes	All complaint communications will include reference of the Housing Ombudsman and provides their contact details.
2.8	Landlords must provide early advice to residents regarding their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service throughout their complaint, not only when the landlord's complaints process is exhausted.	Yes	As per above

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.2	Where a landlord has set up channels to communicate with its residents via social media, then it should expect to receive complaints via those channels. Policies should contain details of the steps that will be taken when a complaint is received via social media and how confidentiality and privacy will be maintained.	Yes	Social media posts are managed by our contact centre. All customers are contact via our contact centre and complaints are raised when required. Customer's complaints will then be acknowledge in line with the Customer Feedback Policy.

Section 3 - Complaint handling personnel

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
3.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling to ensure complaints receive the necessary attention, and that these are reported to the governing body. This Code	Yes	Grove Village complaints may be managed by either Your Housing Group or Morgan Sindall Property Services dependent on the nature of

	will refer to that person or team as the “complaints officer”.		the issue. Complaints are overseen by designated managers.
3.2	...the complaint handler appointed must have appropriate complaint handling skills and no conflicts of interest.	Yes	All complaint handlers are experienced in managing complaints. Training can be provided if required.

Best practice ‘should’ requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
3.3	Complaint handlers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be able to act sensitively and fairly • be trained to handle complaints and deal with distressed and upset residents • have access to staff at all levels to facilitate quick resolution of complaints • have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes quickly and fairly. 	Yes	All complaint handlers are provided training on how to manage a complaint.

Section 4 - Complaint handling principles

Mandatory ‘must’ requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.1	Any decision to try and resolve a concern must be taken in agreement with the resident and a landlord’s audit trail/records should be able to demonstrate this. Landlords must ensure that efforts to resolve a resident’s concerns do not obstruct access to the	Yes	Service requests or situations which a customer wishes to have rectified that do not satisfy the criteria for a formal complaint will be recorded as an informal complaint. This ensures that there is a record on the system of

	complaints procedure or result in any unreasonable delay. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'pre-complaint stage') as this causes unnecessary confusion for residents. When a complaint is made, it must be acknowledged and logged at stage one of the complaints procedure within five days of receipt .		the situation and the actions taken within 2 working days. All formal complaints are now to be acknowledged within 5 working days
4.2	Within the complaint acknowledgement, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	Yes	On the very rare occasion it is deemed that a complaint is not to be escalated to stage 2 of our complaints process, an explanation as to why is given to the customer as well as advice as to how the complaint can be escalated to the Housing Ombudsman.
4.6	A complaint investigation must be conducted in an impartial manner.	Yes	All complaint information is recorded on complaint systems, which details times, dates, correspondence, communications, pictures reports, and all emails are tracked.
4.7	The complaint handler must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deal with complaints on their merits • act independently and have an open mind • take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest • consider all information and evidence carefully • keep the complaint confidential as far as possible, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter. 	Yes	Managing unreasonable persistence is part of the complaints policy.
4.11	Landlords must adhere to any reasonable arrangements agreed with residents in terms of frequency and method of communication	Yes	Once a complaint has been closed, we will agree the contact with the resident, until all outstanding actions have been completed.

4.12	The resident, and if applicable any staff member who is the subject of the complaint, must also be given a fair chance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out their position • comment on any adverse findings before a final decision is made. 	Yes	Where complaints are unclear or detail is insufficient, we will make contact with the complainant to ensure we fully understand and respond to the complaint and they have an opportunity to set out their position.
4.13	A landlord must include in its complaints policy its timescales for a resident to request escalation of a complaint	Yes	We stipulate in our complaints policy and will also include this in letters.
4.14	A landlord must not unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure and must have clear and valid reasons for taking that course of action. Reasons for declining to escalate a complaint must be clearly set out in a landlord's complaints policy and must be the same as the reasons for not accepting a complaint.	Yes	Should a complaint be refused an escalation at stage 2, full reasons are explained to the complainant including how they can contact the Housing Ombudsman.
4.15	A full record must be kept of the complaint, any review and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties and any reports or surveys prepared.	Yes	All correspondence, notes, pictures, reports, etc are recorded on our in-housing CRM complaints module.
4.18	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives when pursuing a complaint.	Yes	Our unreasonable persistence policy forms part of our complaints policy.

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.3	Landlords should manage residents' expectations from the outset, being clear where a desired outcome is unreasonable or unrealistic	Yes	Expectations are managed at the outset of any complaint and during initial and all communications

4.4	A complaint should be resolved at the earliest possible opportunity, having assessed what evidence is needed to fully consider the issues, what outcome would resolve the matter for the resident and whether there are any urgent actions required.	Yes	Complaint handlers are encouraged to resolve all complaints in a timely manner. We are part of a PFI contract which requires all complaints to have a written response in 10 working days.
4.5	Landlords should give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord where this is reasonable.	Yes	All customers have the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint for them, as set out in our Complaints Policy.
4.8	Where a key issue of a complaint relates to the parties' legal obligations landlords should clearly set out their understanding of the obligations of both parties.	Yes	We are always guided by specific tenancy / leaseholder agreements and our customer feedback policy.
4.9	Communication with the resident should not generally identify individual members of staff or contractors.	Yes	Should a customer identify a member of staff or contractor within their complaint, then they will be identified back to them within any correspondence, however this is not common practice to do so where the staff member has not been identified.
4.10	Landlords should keep residents regularly updated about the progress of the investigation.	Yes	We are required to respond in 10 working days as part of the PFI contract. If a review is complex then we will ensure communications are agreed with the customer.
4.16	Landlords should seek feedback from residents in relation to the landlord's complaint handling as part of the drive to encourage a positive complaint and learning culture.	Yes	We undertake an annual tenant satisfaction survey to review feedback. We have a PFI monitoring panel and tenants and residents group and will also seek feedback through these forums.

4.17	Landlords should recognise the impact that being complained about can have on future service delivery. Landlords should ensure that staff are supported and engaged in the complaints process, including the learning that can be gained	Yes	All complaint handlers are supported throughout the process of dealing with a complaint. Lessons learnt will be reviewed and as applicable included in the complaint response.
4.19	Any restrictions placed on a resident's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be appropriate to their needs and should demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	Our unreasonable persistence policy (included in the complaints policy) is in line with the Equality Act 2010

Section 5 - Complaint stages

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Stage 1

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.1	Landlords must respond to the complaint <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being logged. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	As per our Customer Feedback Policy, Stage 1 complaints are to be responded to within 10 working days. Should an extension be required to this time, only an additional 10 working days will be requested which is communicated with the customer
5.5	A complaint response must be sent to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue, are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned expeditiously with regular updates provided to the resident.	Yes	All complaint responses are sent within 10 working days of the complaint being raised and any outstanding actions are monitored and recorded.
5.6	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	A standard template is used to ensure all points of the complaint which have been raised are responded to. This will also refer to any good practice, policy's or law where appropriate.

5.8	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage one in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complaint stage • the decision on the complaint • the reasons for any decisions made • the details of any remedy offered to put things right • details of any outstanding actions • details of how to escalate the matter to stage two if the resident is not satisfied with the answer 	Yes	Complaint responses have a standard template which ensures all points are covered and responded to, providing ease of reference for the complaint handlers and making each section clear for the customer
------------	---	-----	---

Stage 2

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.9	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage one it must be progressed to stage two of the landlord's procedure, unless an exclusion ground now applies. In instances where a landlord declines to escalate a complaint it must clearly communicate in writing its reasons for not escalating as well as the resident's right to approach the Ombudsman about its decision.	Yes	Advise on how to escalate a complaint is clearly provided at the bottom of all stage 1 complaint responses, including a timescale for when they should reply back by.
5.10	On receipt of the escalation request, landlords must set out their understanding of issues outstanding and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	Yes	All complainants which are unclear will be followed up with the customer to ensure the review is through and accurate.
5.11	Landlords must only escalate a complaint to stage two once it has completed stage one and at the request of the resident.	Yes	Complaints are only escalated to stage 2 after a stage 1 response has been sent.
5.12	The person considering the complaint at stage two, must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage one.	Yes	Stage 2 complaints will be managed by a different manager. This may be a Grove Village manager or another senior manager of Your Housing Group or Morgan Sindall

			Property Management Services. This is set out in our Complaints Policy.
5.13	Landlords must respond to the stage two complaint <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being escalated. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	All stage 2 complaints are responded to within 10 working days which is in line with our PFI contract. If for any reason further time is needed, we will write to the customer to confirm a request for an additional 10 working days.
5.16	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage two in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complaint stage • the complaint definition • the decision on the complaint • the reasons for any decisions made • the details of any remedy offered to put things right • details of any outstanding actions and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the landlord has a third stage, details of how to escalate the matter to stage three • if this was the final stage, details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied. 	Yes	Complaint responses have a standard template which ensures all points are covered and responded to, providing ease of reference for the complaint handlers and making each section clear for the customer. The template also sets out how the customer can escalate their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman should they not be satisfied with the outcome

Stage 3

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.17	Two stage landlord complaint procedures are ideal. This ensures that the complaint process is not unduly long. If landlords strongly believe a third stage is necessary, they must set out their reasons for this as part of their self-assessment. A process with more than three stages is not acceptable under any circumstances.	Yes	We have a 2-stage process as set out in our Customer Feedback Policy

5.20	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage three in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complaint stage • the complaint definition • the decision on the complaint • the reasons for any decisions made • the details of any remedy offered to put things right • details of any outstanding actions • details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied 	Yes	Complaint responses have a standard template which ensures all points are covered and responded to, providing ease of reference for the complaint handlers and making each section clear for the customer. The template also sets out how the customer can escalate their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman should they not be satisfied with the outcome.
-------------	---	-----	---

Best practice 'should' requirements

Stage 1

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.2	If an extension beyond 20 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.	Yes	We will always write to a customer and confirm with them should we require any additional time to resolve the complaint
5.3	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response.	Yes	Should the customer not agree with the request for more time, we will provide the customer with the contact details of the Housing Ombudsman.
5.4	Where the problem is a recurring issue, the landlord should consider any older reports as part of the background to the complaint if this will help to resolve the issue for the resident.	Yes	We will always fully investigate any issues which may mean looking back of repairs from before a current resident was residing in the property or other reported issues which may be relevant. We may not however include these within our final response, should they be subject to GDPR

5.7	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these should be incorporated into the stage one response if they are relevant and the stage one response has not been issued. Where the stage one response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the complaint should be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	Should additional relevant complaints be raised while a complaint is still open, this will be included in the complaint. If they are deemed not relevant, they may be recorded as a new complaint.
------------	---	-----	--

Stage 2

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.14	If an extension beyond 10 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.	Yes	Extension requested with be confirmed and agreed with customers
5.15	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response	Yes	Should the customer not agree with the request for more time, we will provide the customer with the contact details of the Housing Ombudsman.

Stage 3

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.18	Complaints should only go to a third stage if the resident has actively requested a third stage review of their complaint. Where a third stage is in place and has been requested, landlords must respond to the stage three complaint <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being escalated. Additional time will only be justified if related to convening a panel. An explanation and a date for when the stage three response will be received should be provided to the resident.	Yes	We do not have a 3-stage process

5.19	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response.	Yes	As Above
-------------	--	-----	----------

Section 6 - Putting things right

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
6.1	Effective dispute resolution requires a process designed to resolve complaints. Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right.	Yes	Complaint responses will always detail what if anything has gone wrong and how we intend to put this right, should this be by a repair, an action or with compensation.
6.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the extent of any service failures and the level of detriment caused to the resident as a result. A landlord must carefully manage the expectations of residents and not promise anything that cannot be delivered or would cause unfairness to other residents.	Yes	As part of setting expectations, customers will be advised what we can and cannot deliver in terms of resolution
6.5	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	All complaint responses as part of the closing template detail the proposed or completed actions which have been confirmed and agreed with the customer
6.6	In awarding compensation, a landlord must consider whether any statutory payments are due, if any quantifiable losses have been incurred, the time and trouble a resident has been put to as well as any distress and inconvenience caused.	Yes	All compensation awards are based on customers individual circumstances and inconvenience.

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
--------------	------------------	----------------	---

6.3	Landlords should look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether anything needs to be 'put right' in terms of process or systems to the benefit of all residents.	Yes	Lessons learned are recorded on all complaints and reported on either by on a individual or trend basis
6.7	In some cases, a resident may have a legal entitlement to redress. The landlord should still offer a resolution where possible, obtaining legal advice as to how any offer of resolution should be worded.	Yes	Should a customer have a legal entitlement to redress, advice is sort for our solicitors or inhouse disrepair team

Section 7 - Continuous learning and improvement

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.2	Accountability and transparency are integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints in their annual report and more frequently to their residents, staff and scrutiny panels.	Yes	An annual report is prepared and shared with board and Manchester City Council who are the landlord.

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.3	A member of the governing body should be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This role will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight to the governing body on the landlord's complaint handling performance.	Yes	Grove Village have a general manager who has oversight on performance. Self assessments and complaints policy review will involve the Grove Village general manager, senior managers of Your Housing Group and Morgan Sindall Property Services and will also be subject to Landlord and Grove Village Board approvals.
7.4	As a minimum, governing bodies should receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular updates on the volume, categories and outcome of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance including compliance with the Ombudsman's orders 	Yes	All required reports are provided to Board, including performance, volumes, categories and compliance with Ombudsman orders. This information is also provided to the

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling, The annual performance report produced by the Ombudsman, where applicable Individual complaint outcomes where necessary, including where the Ombudsman made findings of severe maladministration or referrals to regulatory bodies. The implementation of management responses should be tracked to ensure they are delivered to agreed timescales. The annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code for scrutiny and challenge. 		Manchester City Council who are the landlord.
7.5	Any themes or trends should be assessed by senior management to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks or policies and procedures that require revision. They should also be used to inform staff and contractor training.	Yes	Senior managers hold a number of regular meetings. We hold a six weekly project liaison meeting and complaints forms part of the agenda. This meeting is also attended by Manchester City Council who are the landlord.
7.6	Landlords should have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all employees that reflects the need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints rather than blaming others act within the Professional Standards for engaging with complaints as set by the Chartered Institute of Housing. 	Yes	Senior managers have an overview of all complaints within their teams and are classed as complaint owners, above complaint handlers.

Section 8 - Self-assessment and compliance

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
--------------	------------------	----------------	---

8.1	Landlords must carry out an annual self-assessment against the Code to ensure their complaint handling remains in line with its requirements.	Yes	All future assessments will be conducted annually alongside a review of the complaints policy for Grove Village.
8.2	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure and/or change in procedures.	Yes	Any further changes will see a further self-assessment completed
8.3	<p>Following each self-assessment, a landlord must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report the outcome of their self-assessment to their governing body. In the case of local authorities, self-assessment outcomes should be reported to elected members • publish the outcome of their assessment on their website if they have one, or otherwise make accessible to residents • include the self-assessment in their annual report section on complaints handling performance 	Yes	The self-assessment will be included on the Grove Village section of YHG web site.