

Housing Ombudsman

Complaint Handling Code

Self-assessment – interim report

Period Covered: 1 October 2021 – 31 March 2022



This self-assessment looks at our performance against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code in place at the time of our review. The Code acts as a guide for customers, setting out what they can and should expect from us if they make a complaint.

Amendments have recently been made to the Code which came into effect on 1 April 2022. Our future self-assessments will review our performance against this updated criteria.

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code

1. Definition of a complaint

Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint?

Yes ✓

“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.”

Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?

Yes ✓

On very rare occasions we may not be able to consider a complaint, such as:

- when a customer behaves in a way which could be considered inappropriate, abusive or where harassment occurred
- when we feel that a complaint is unreasonable (based on its content), where we have received a high level of unsubstantiated complaints or where the frequency of individual contact, could hinder our consideration of their, or other people's complaints
- complaints relating to another service provider that is not a sub-contractor – these complaints can't be investigated by us and will need to be directed to the relevant provider e.g. any complaints about services delivered by the local authority such as bin collections, or a utility supplier handling a power cut
- where a customer's complaint relates to an active insurance claim - this will be managed by our insurers who will contact the customer directly
- issues that are subject to legal action or proceedings will be managed by the solicitor appointed to act on our behalf - this would include disrepair cases where there is a specific process in place.



Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to customers?

Yes ✓

When drafting our Complaints and Compliments Policy, we talked with customers who had recently made a complaint. This was to better understand the service they had received and understand where we could make improvements. The overwhelming feedback was that we should simplify our policy. These customers were later recontacted with a draft of the new policy, which incorporated their recommendations and included an outline of our exclusions.

Our exclusions are considered reasonable and fair as they relate to matters outside of our control and/or are subject to legal proceedings.

2. Accessibility

Is there more than one way for a customer to make a complaint?

Yes ✓

Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?

Yes ✓

Our complaints policy can be found on our website [here](#).

Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?

Yes ✓

To comply with the Equality Act 2010, an Equality Analysis (EA) was completed and approved in June 2020, as part of the policy review.

Do we regularly advise customers about our complaints process?

Yes ✓

Information about our complaints performance and improvements feature regularly in our customer communications. This includes our customer magazine, Annual Report and a dedicated You said, we did page on our website. Our Customer Services Committee, which is a committee of the Group Board, also review our complaints performance quarterly with a full review at the end of each financial year.



3. Complaints team and process

Does Livv have a complaint officer or an equivalent?

Yes ✓

Livv has a Complex Queries & Complaints team

Does the complaint officer have the ability to resolve complaints?

Yes ✓

Does the complaint officer have the authority to involve other departments to resolve disputes?

Yes ✓

If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure, are customers involved in the decision making?

Not applicable

Is any third stage optional for customers?

Not applicable

Does the final stage response inform customers of their right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?

Yes ✓

Do we keep a record of any correspondence about the complaint, including correspondence from the customer?

Yes ✓

At what stage are most complaints resolved?

Stage 1 (87%)



Are customers kept informed and updated during the complaints process?

Yes ✓

Yes, all customers receive an acknowledgement of their complaint by the Complex Queries and Complaints Team. They are kept up-to-date through phone calls and email. For more complex cases, where more time to investigate is needed, customers are contacted to agree an extension. Finally, they receive a full written outcome of their complaint, which is often accompanied by a telephone call from the investigating manager to explain the reason for the decision.

Whilst managing complaints is a process, we understand and appreciate that we are dealing with people. We see the importance of this level of engagement, particularly where the decision is not to uphold the complaint.

Are customers informed of Livv's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?

Yes ✓

Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?

Yes ✓

Are customers advised of how to escalate their complaint at the end of each stage?

Yes ✓

What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?

87% (401/461)*

*This relates to the resolution of complaints received within the period (461)

What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?

13% (60/461)

What proportion of complaint responses are sent within The Code's timescales?

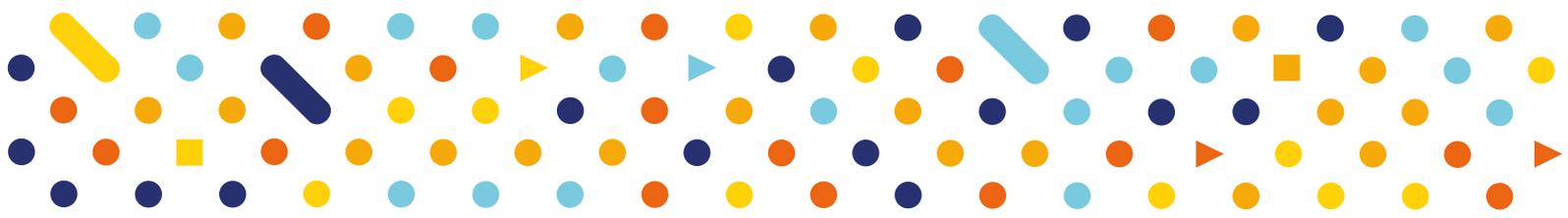
Stage one - 84% (425/508)*

Stage one (with extension) - 16% (83/508)*

Stage two - 95% (57/60)

Stage two (with extension) - 5% (3/60)

*This relates to total number of stage one complaints resolved within the period (total 508) which includes complaints that were raised in the months before the reporting period that required extensions



Where timescales have been extended, did we have good reason?

Yes ✓

Yes, these have been due to complex issues which have required additional inspections to assess the matter to ensure a full investigation has been completed.

Where timescales have been extended, did we keep the customer informed?

Yes ✓

We'll always apologise for the delay, explain the reasons and give clear timescales for when the customer can expect the matter to be resolved.

What proportion of complaints do we resolve to customers' satisfaction?

38%

We use an SMS feedback solution, Rant & Rave, to record satisfaction with how complaints have been handled. During the timeframe of our review, 21 customers replied to our question about satisfaction - eight customers said they were fully satisfied, giving a score of 38%. This is measured against a target of 45% which reflects our ambition to continually improve and be recognised by customers for doing so.

5. Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service

Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?

Yes ✓

Where timescales were extended, did we keep the Ombudsman informed?

No timescales extended in the period

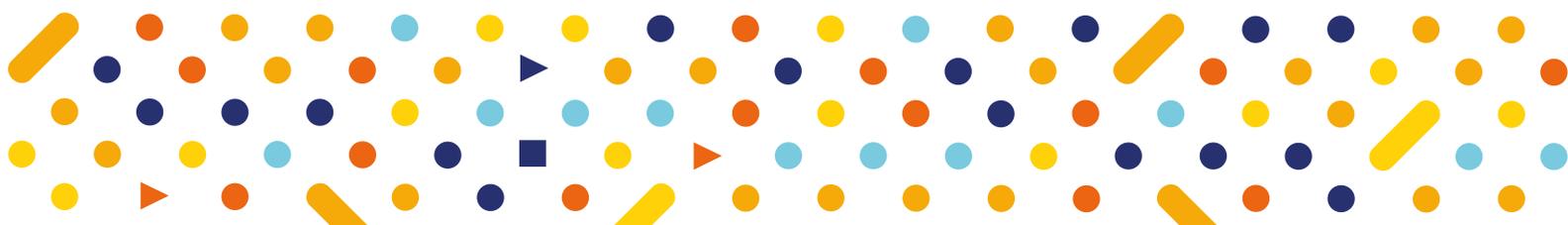
6. Fairness in complaint handling

Are customers able to complain via a representative throughout the complaint process?

Yes ✓

If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?

Yes ✓



How many cases did we refuse to escalate?

No refusals to escalate occurred during the period

What was the reason for the refusal?

Not applicable

Did we explain our decision to the customer?

Not applicable

7. Outcomes and remedies

Where something has gone wrong, are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?

Yes ✓

We always seek to resolve the situation for our customer and then consider the reasons for it. We look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether systems or processes need changing to benefit all our customers. This forms part of our regular reporting and planning process. We report the changes we've made to our customers via our website and in articles in our customer magazine.

8. Continuous learning and improvement

What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?

We have made several changes as a direct result of learning from both complaints and our customer feedback solution, Rant & Rave. Full details can be found on our website [here](#).

How do we share these lessons:

a) with customers?

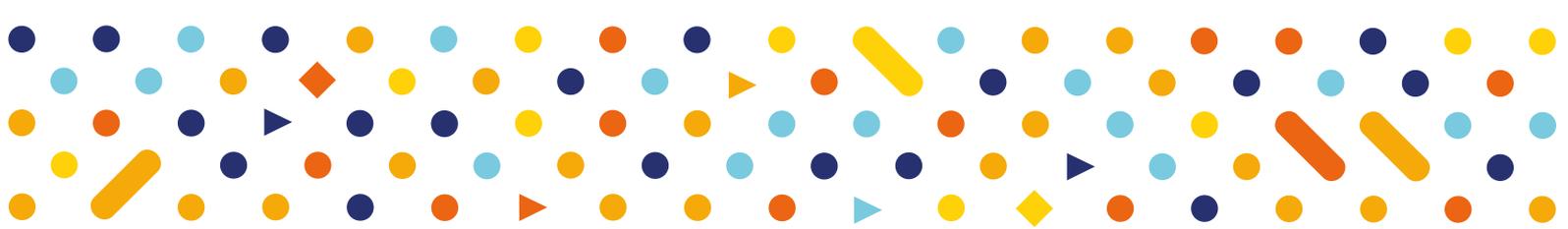
Learnings from complaints are shared in detail on our website [here](#).

b) with the board/governing body?

Our Customer Services Committee have accountability for complaints. Performance is discussed quarterly at each meeting, with an annual summary also reviewed.

c) in the Annual Report?

Complaints performance features in our Annual Report, available on our website [here](#).



Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?

Yes ✓

What changes have we made?

The creation of our Complex Queries and Complaints Team was informed by feedback from our customer feedback channels. It demonstrates our commitment to engaging with our customers to resolve their issues while adhering to the Code. This ensures that complaints are dealt with effectively and used as a tool for continuous improvement.

Our risk management reporting system has been updated with metrics showing our compliance against the Code. These will be updated in the next reporting period to reflect the latest revision of the Code.

