



Report of: Corporate Director

Meeting of:	Date	Ward(s)
Audit Committee	25 January 2021	All

SUBJECT: Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code – Self Assessment 2020

1.	Synopsis
1.1	Following the publication of The Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code July 2020, this report provides a summary of the requirements of the code and the framework expected from landlord members, boards and executive members.
2.	Recommendations
2.1	To note The Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code July 2020, See Appendix 1.
2.2	To note the completed self-assessment form, See Appendix 2 , which must be completed by 31 December 2020.
2.3	To note that, in the case of local authorities, a self-assessment outcome is reported to “elected members”.
2.4	To note that failure to comply with the conditions of membership may result in an Ombudsman’s determination of compliant handling failure and order to rectify within a given timescale (paragraphs 13 and 73 of the Housing Ombudsman scheme).

2.5	To note that failures under the Scheme and Code would result in a complaint handling failure order; list of failures under the scheme provided, Part C, points 1.3 of Appendix 1.
2.6	To note the Housing Ombudsman expects landlords to publish the outcome of their self-assessments. The Ombudsman may request sight of the assessment and evidence in support. The Ombudsman may require landlords to periodically repeat the self- assessment, following any amendments to the code or significant change to landlords organisational structure.
3.	Background
3.1	The purpose of the code is to enable landlords to resolve complaints raised by residents quickly and use the learning from complaints to drive service improvement.
3.2	The complaint handling code sets out requirements for member landlords that will allow them to respond to complaints effectively and fairly.
3.3	The codes set out six elements for landlords to review against existing policies and processes. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Definition of a complaint 2. Accessibility and awareness 3. Complaint team, procedure, timeliness and responsiveness 4. Fairness in complaint handling 5. Putting things right 6. Continuous learning and improvement
3.4	The Corporate Complaints Team and Complaints Lead Officers across the Housing Directorate have conducted a review against the Code and reflected on the Council's policy and process, which has resulted in the final self-assessment Appendix 2.
3.5	As expected by the Housing Ombudsman a regular review of the self-assessment will be conducted and appropriate action taken to ensure complaint handling is in line with the Code.
4.	Implications
4.1	Financial implications: There are no financial implications arising from this report.
4.2	Legal Implications: There are no legal implications arising from this report. Compliance with the code forms part of the membership obligations set out in the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. Landlords should comply with the requirements of the Code.
4.3	Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030: There are no environmental implications arising from this report.
4.4	Resident Impact Assessment: No change to resident's ability to make a complaint in relation to housing matters.
	The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard

	to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. (No change to resident's ability to make a complaint in relation to housing matters.)
5.	Reason for recommendations
5.1	To ensure that Councillors are kept informed about complaint handling that have been reviewed by the Housing Ombudsman.

Appendices

- Appendix 1. The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code July 2020.
- See Appendix 2. Housing self-assessment form.

Signed by:		
	 Maxine Holdsworth, Corporate Directors, Housing	Date 8/01/2021

Report Author:	Karen McKenzie
Tel:	07825098974
Email:	Karen.mckenzie@islington.gov.uk