

Southern Oaks complaint self-assessment review against the requirements of the code

Code section	Code Requirement	Do we follow the code?	Evidence	Explanation and Commentary
1/1.2 Definition of a complaint	A complaint must be defined as: ‘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.’	Yes	We recognise that a complaint has a specific meaning, and we have laid this out within our complaints policy, which are published on our website under Complaints.	<p>Working within the code we understand that there are many requests made of our team, and it is important that we recognise any expression of dissatisfaction. This we have laid out within our procedure for all to follow.</p> <p>It is important to us that each resident receives a personalised service in this area creating a faster resolution and better overall experience. We monitor this area on a regular basis taking on board all considerations so that we can improve on the current procedure.</p>
1.3	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 handled in line with the landlord’s complaints policy.	Yes	It is our policy to treat all concerns in the same manner as a complaint. Whilst we recognise the difference between a concern and a complaint (defined within our policies and procedures and published on our website under Complaints) we have found that using the same vigorous process benefits both parties.	It is important that we recognise any area of dissatisfaction, and our policy and procedure lay out a pathway for all to follow. Complaints are inevitable and we treat them on a case-by- case basis, following our defined Complaints procedure laid out within the Residents Handbook, hard copies on Reception, with an electronic pathway on our website.
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	We recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint, and these are defined in our policies and procedures under items 1 & 2, which are published on our website under Complaints.	The majority are requests are made to either assist, direct, improve, fix, and repair or signpost which we collect under a service request format. We also understand that not working to a planned schedule to reduce or resolve these requests acts as a conduit/ pathway for a potential complaint. We have improved our complaint form so that we can clearly identify the difference between a service request and a complaint.
1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	We signpost our residents to the complaints procedure if they become dissatisfied with the outcome of a service request. We have robust procedures within our policy for all to follow. Our policy is to follow all actions to a conclusion, regularly checking in with our residents regarding updates.	It is important to us that regular communications play an integral part to ease dissatisfaction. We agree that service requests that are resolved immediately or shortly thereafter within a reasonable timeframe can avoid an escalation to a complaint.



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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 complaints pathway is easy to follow and located on the first page of our website. We regularly ask residents if they are being treated well and signpost them to our complaint's procedure. This is also conducted within the survey process just to make sure.	We recognise that an expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey signpost that resident so that they are aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to.
2.1 Exclusions	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	Our complaints policy sets out circumstances where we would not consider a complaint. These are reasonable and do not deny individuals access to redress. Each complaint is treated on its own merits.	Whilst we recognise that there may be some exclusions to the definition of a complaint, we choose to treat all complaint requests on own their own merit and follow through with our procedure regardless of whether the request falls outside of the definition.
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"> • The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. • 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. • Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy. 	Yes	Our complaints policy sets out circumstances where we would not consider a complaint. These are reasonable and do not deny individuals access to redress.	We acknowledge the circumstances that may exclude from being a complaint. We actively collaborate with our residents regardless to make sure that all areas of dissatisfaction and brought to a swift conclusion. Any areas where we feel we have fallen short of the standards that we set for ourselves; we bring to the attention of the resident.
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	Our policy is clear and easy to follow, and we accept all complaints made to us within the described timeframe. To date all concern/complaints have been handled within a reasonable time frame.	This creates an environment of inclusion, transparency and one where residents recognise that we will do all we can to resolve their request within the allocated time frame.



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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 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.	Yes	We have not encountered this issue as we aim to follow through with all areas of dissatisfaction which are usually resolved within a short time frame.	We recognise the code in this regard and if we encounter such an issue, we will write to the resident laying out the reasons to why the matter is not suitable for a complaint.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Our policy lays out our procedure and as we treat all areas of concern the same, our pathway to resolve matters is considered robust.	It is important to us that each claim is considered on its own merits, reviewing all circumstances before considering the pathway forward.
3.1 Accessibility and awareness	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must 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.	Yes	We provide different channels through which individuals can make complaints. These are accessible and we collaborate with our residents to make reasonable adjustments where necessary.	Our procedure allows for several pathways for any person to make a complaint, these are detailed and mentioned within the residents Handbook, the complaint policy and procedure and on our website. We also cover this area within the TSM survey regarding resident's feedback. We are now looking at creating a link from our webpage that allows for direct and immediate feedback if dissatisfaction exists.
3.2	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.	Yes	Our Complaints policy and procedure is an active and live subject. All staff understanding its importance and how to assist residents where necessary. Staff are also aware of who is on the Executive Team, the Complaints Officer, and the Member Responsible for Complaints.	We recognise the importance to signpost and how and to whom to speak. This is laid out robustly within our complaints policy and procedure.
3.3	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.	Yes	We understand that it is important for all that use our facilities to have a clear pathway to follow should you wish to make a complaint. We feel our policy and procedure allows for to take place.	Whilst we do not have that many concern/complaints we remain vigilant and recognise that there are many signs to that may point to a dissatisfied resident or staff member. Our mandatory training regarding safeguarding adults adds value here.
3.4	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.	Yes	Our policy and procedure detail a two-stage process and what happens in each stage. Our policy and procedure is published on our website under complaints.	We have not had any compliant reach stage two, but our procedure lays out what would happen if an occasion arose.



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3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	The policy gives clear details of how we publish including information about the Ombudsman and this code.	
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	We offer every person that makes a complaint to opportunity to have a representative if they choose. Our policy indicates this.	We feel this is a key point and our residents are aware that they can be represented by a person their choice.
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	This is detailed within our policy and procedure.	We signpost these details should a resident or family member request it.
4.1 Complaint Handling Resources	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	We have designated; sufficient resource assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling. Complaints are viewed by the Complaints Officer and our core service group. This is resourced accordingly.	We have adequate resources allocated within our existing staffing team to manage all complaints as they are made. We now have a Complaints Officer and Executive Team Leadership staff allocated to oversee complaints. This review management is via director and trustees (Member Responsible for Complaints) that also forms a robust appeals process.
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	We have a separate executive senior Team members to review all concern/complaints and this team is line managed by the complaints officer who is a director.	Our team stems from our most experienced members of staff that have the authority to act accordingly.
4.3	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.	Yes	Our staff training is mandatory concerning complaint handling.	Staff training is important to us to make sure that we are all up to date with the latest guidelines and techniques to handle complaints.
5.1 The complaint handling process	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	We have a single policy for dealing with complaints covered by the Code and individuals are given the option of raising a complaint where they express dissatisfaction that meets the definition of the complaint in our policy.	As mentioned within the previous points, we have a single policy that gives the option to raise a complaint where they express dissatisfaction regardless of where we feel the definition is met or not. We review our complaints policy on an annual basis.



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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 unnecessary confusion.	Yes	Our policy is single with two stages, is robust and well laid out.	Our process has 2 stages and is easy to read. If there are any issues our teams spend time with the individual to make sure that they have a full understanding of the procedure.
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	As above.	As above.
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	Our complaints procedure is as indicated above and handled in house by senior staff.	To date we have managed all dissatisfaction/Concerns or Complaints in house through the Executive Team. If this occasion were to arise, we would use the same 2 stage process as indicated within our policy.
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	n/a	As above.	As above.
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	We signpost our residents to our policy and if there is any confusion we actively spend time to make sure that the process is transparent, reasonable, and fair.	
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	We refer residents to our policy and procedure. Our team closely monitors all circumstances to avoid any confusion.	We have encountered such a position, but as we actively involve our residents in the process with regular updates, we feel that we would meet this part of the code.



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5.8	<p>At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind. b. gives the resident a fair chance to set out their position. c. takes measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. considers all relevant information and evidence carefully. 	Yes	We feel our procedure covers these points and our executive team actively follow our procedure as it sets out a guide from start to finish.	
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	We follow all concern/complaints to a conclusion, keeping residents updated at regular intervals.	
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 agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	Yes	Our policy takes this into consideration.	Our procedure is inclusive, and we make whatever reasonable adjustments is necessary to make sure the resident is satisfied that the process being conducted is reasonable and fair. system which is securitised with limited access.
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	We have never refused to escalate a complaint. We have several layers of senior staff/trustees that can review where necessary.	
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, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.	Yes	We record all information regarding each complaint, and this is held electronically within our data system. This system is cloud based to minimise risk of losing data.	



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5.13	<p>Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process.</p> <p>Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.</p>	Yes	We actively look to resolve issue as soon as we can to the resident's satisfaction. Our satisfaction survey is evidence of this point.	Where we are unable to resolve matters quickly, we update residents to make sure they are aware of how we are trying to resolve matters.
5.14	<p>Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives.</p> <p>Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.</p>	Yes	We have policies in place as well as information within the tenancy agreement regarding unacceptable behaviour. These policies are available for residents' perusal if they choose. These are reviewed annually.	
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	Our policies specific in nature to challenging/unacceptable behaviour are proportionate and take into consideration the equality Act 2010.	
6.1: Complaints stages (Stage 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	We find that most of our complaints are handled within the process of stage 1 complaints and are in line with timescales and processes set out in the Code. We record all complaints with a separate data system. Our staff are very experienced and acknowledge that most complaints can be rectified within a short period of time.	<p>Our review process has indicated that there have been some instances within this past year where these timescales have been breached.</p> <p>Where we have not been able to act within the initial recommended time frames, we have written to the individual to acknowledge this deficiency and explain next steps. A high majority of all concerns/complaints are identified and completed within 28 days.</p>
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaint's procedure within five working days of the complaint being received.	Yes	Under the code, Stage 1 complaints are acknowledged within 5 working days and responded to within 10 working days of acknowledgement.	
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	As above.	



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6.4	<p>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.</p> <p>Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.</p>	Yes	Our procedure indicates that this falls within our regular updates and if we have to extend this period, we will review this with the resident and put this into writing.	
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	This forms part of our policy	We have not had any opportunity to use this point, but we understand and agree to making the resident aware. This point will made clearer within our policy.
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 promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	We fulfil this under resident updates and put this into writing. We also write at its conclusion. All actions are tracked and recorded.	This point will made clearer within our policy.
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	This is evidenced by writing to the resident, meeting with the resident to make sure that all points are concluded in a satisfactory manner.	
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	We treat all complaints as a separate issue.	We have not encountered this issue.



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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"> a. the complaint stage. b. the complaint definition. c. the decision on the complaint. d. the reasons for any decisions made. e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right. f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response. 	Yes	We cover these points in writing at the conclusion. We couple this with regular updates to the resident.	We have had no complaint reach the end of stage 1 but acknowledge the point made.
6.10 Complaints stages (Stage 2)	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	Covered in our Policy and procedure.	We have had no complaint reach stage 2 but acknowledge the point made.
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaint's procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	We have had no complaint reach stage 2 but acknowledge the point made.
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	Covered in our Policy and procedure.	We have had no complaint reach stage 2. If we did reach stage 2, we would follow our procedure with the regular review and update process to try and resolve matters. We recognise that residents do not have to give a reason for a request 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	Covered in our Policy and procedure	We recognise this point and have several senior trustees at hand to take over if this point arises.



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6.14	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the rLandlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Covered in our Policy and procedure.	We have had no complaint reach stage 2 but acknowledge the point made.
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	Covered in our Policy and procedure.	We have had no complaint reach stage 2 but acknowledge the point made.
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	No	We will now make this part of our policy	We have not had any opportunity to use this point, but we understand and agree to making the resident aware. This point will made clearer within our policy.
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	We fulfil this under resident updates and put this into writing. We also write at its conclusion. All actions are tracked and recorded.	This point will made clearer within our policy.
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	As with stage 1.	



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6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the complaint stage. b. the complaint definition. c. the decision on the complaint. d. the reasons for any decisions made. e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right. f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied. 	Yes	We cover these points in writing at the conclusion. We couple this with regular updates to the resident.	We have had no complaint reach stage 2 but acknowledge the point made.
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	Covered in our Policy and procedure.	We have had no complaint reach stage 2 but acknowledge the point made.
7.1 Putting things right	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. These can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologising. • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong. • Providing an explanation, assistance, or reasons. • Taking action if there has been delay. • Reconsidering or changing a decision. • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum. • Providing a financial remedy. • Changing policies, procedures, or practices. 			
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Our staff are well versed in taking into consideration the needs of vulnerable adults and as such review each case with compassion.	



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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.	Yes	Our policy identifies how to inform residents, this is usually held with a face-to-face meeting, followed by a letter identifying these points.	
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	We have changed our policy to reflect the code of practice.	
8.1 Performance reporting and self-assessment	Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. 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. c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman. d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints. e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord. 	Yes	We produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge where necessary which now includes a self-assessment against the Code.	Whilst we conduct a resident satisfaction survey to receive feedback from residents covering multiple subjects, which is not specific to complaints. This is our first self-assessment, and we have used the template for the code in this regard. We recognise that we can further learn from this experience to improve procedures that will benefit us all at SO. We recognise that this requires a review on an annual basis.
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.	Yes	This report is reviewed by senior trustees within Services and at Board level. It is also published on our website.	



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8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self- assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	This report is reviewed by senior trustees within Services and at Board level. It is also published on our website.	
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	We agree to this process, which will be undertaken by the Complaints Officer .	
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 affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.	Yes	We have an independent IT security partner, however if such an incident took place our information is backed up in our cloud so we can provide a continuity of service.	
9.1 Scrutiny & Oversight	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.	Yes	We have appropriate senior leadership and governance oversight of the complaints process and performance.	We have a resolute Service committee that sits monthly comprising senior staff and Trustees to oversee the running of operations of SO.
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	All data recorded is used as a tool for lessons learned.	We recognise that a robust culture requires a live complaints process which is interlinked with lessons learned. This is discussed as an agenda point at our monthly Services meeting with senior trustees.
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.	Yes	All complaints are discussed at a senior level. We have a culture of listening to all concerned to make sure we improve as we move forward. Lessons learned assists us to improve in this regard.	
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	The Director of Business and operations is the Complaints Officer, and the Chairperson represents the Board of Trustees in his capacity as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC'). In this regard. Both sit on the Services committee.	



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9.5	<p>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').</p>	Yes	This is covered above by the Chairperson of the Board of SO Trustees.	
9.6	<p>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.</p> <p>This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.</p>	Yes	The Chair receives monthly reports within the Services meeting which in turn feeds back to the Board of Trustees.	
9.7	<p>As a minimum, the MRC, and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. regular updates on the volume, categories, and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance. b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling. c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report. 	Yes	The points within 9.7 form part of the KPI presentations that reports monthly to the MRC.	



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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> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. has a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments.b. takes collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; andc. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.	Yes	Our policy and procedure, our executive teamwork within our ethical standard to provide a transparent process to meet the needs of all that have a request, concern, or complaint.	We do not have a blame culture at SO, choosing a process where a collective responsibility for any shortfalls, underpinned by a lesson learned process. We have adopted the code of practice as a guideline to move forward.

Last Reviewed by:	Martin King	Position: Director of Business and Operations	Date: 11/02/2025
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