



Blackpool Coastal
Housing

Blackpool Council

**BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING
HOUSING OMBUDSMAN
COMPLAINT HANDLING CODE
SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM
SEPTEMBER 2026**

INTRODUCTION

The Housing Ombudsman Service look at complaints about housing organisations registered with them and resolve disputes involving the tenants and leaseholders of social landlords.

Its service is free, independent, and impartial. Tenants and landlords can contact the Ombudsman at any time for support in helping to resolve a dispute. Its website, housing-ombudsman.org.uk, provides information and guidance to support Tenants and landlords and it can also be contacted by telephone on 0300 111 3000 or by mail at Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET

The Housing Ombudsman published a revised Complaints Handling Code in 2024, and a key requirement is for landlords to publish a self-assessment against the Code's key complaint handling principles annually.

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.

SECTION 1: DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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 landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'</i>	Yes	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website	Exact definition included in BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 3), BCH Complaint Booklet and definition is stipulated on website. https://www.bch.co.uk/complaintscompliments-and-customer-feedback/how-to-make-a-complaint
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 3), and the BCH Complaint Booklet. Staff Complaint Guidance is also available and cascaded to ensure staff understand the complaints process and that dissatisfaction should be addressed by all staff at point of contact and the choice given to make a complaint. The policy and guidance also stipulates that a complaint from a third party or representative is handled using the same policy and procedure.

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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance • Housing Ombudsman Flowcharts • Staff Team Meetings	This is stipulated in the BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 5), and the BCH Complaint Booklet. Staff Complaint Guidance also outlines this and Housing Ombudsman flow charts regarding service requests have been cascaded to staff and are available on the Staff Intranet in the Complaints quick link. Involvement and Communications Manager attends Staff Team Meetings to discuss the complaints process and provide advice and guidance.
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 5), the BCH Complaint Booklet and Staff Complaint Guidance.

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

- BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure
- BCH Staff Complaint Guidance

This is stipulated in the BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 7), and the BCH Complaint Booklet and Staff Complaint Guidance.

SECTION 2: EXCLUSIONS

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • MRI Housing Management System where refused complaints are recorded along with evidence and reasoning • Quarterly Complaint Reports	This is stipulated in the BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 6), and the BCH Complaint Booklet.
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: ■ 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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website	This is stipulated in the BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 6 and Section 15), and the BCH Complaint Booklet.

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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet	This is stipulated in the BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 6), and the BCH Complaint Booklet.
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • MRI Housing Management System	This is stipulated in the BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 6), and the BCH Complaint Booklet.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure	This is stipulated in the BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 6).

SECTION 3: ACCESSIBILITY AND AWARENESS

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • Reasonable Adjustments Policy • Advocacy & Authority to Act Policy • BCH Website • Customer Profiling • MRI Housing Management System	This is stipulated in the BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure (Sections 8, 9 and 10). BCH have a Reasonable Adjustments Policy to support customers with disabilities and an Advocacy Policy to support vulnerable customers. All staff have access to language interpretation and print services and there is a specific section on the Staff Intranet regarding reasonable adjustments. Any known communication needs, required reasonable adjustments or disabilities are recorded on the MRI Housing Management System.

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

- BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure
- BCH Staff Complaint Guidance
- BCH Staff Intranet
- Staff Briefings
- Staff Team Meeting Minutes
- 'Right First Time' all staff mandatory training

This is stipulated in the BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 9)

All staff have been issued with BCH's Staff Complaint Handling Guidance. This includes information about the complaints process and FAQ's on what to do and are advised to refer the complaint to the dedicated Involvement and Communications Team. This information is also available on the Staff Intranet in the Complaint quick link so can be accessed by all staff and new starters. The staff induction process also covers information on complaints and the process.

Complaints and the process has been covered at staff briefings and continues to be an ongoing team meeting agenda item.

The Involvement & Communications Manager regularly attends Staff Team Meetings to explain the process.

All staff have undergone 'Right First Time' training which is a bespoke customer care and complaint mandatory training course and training is arranged for new starters.

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

- BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure
- BCH Complaint Booklet
- BCH Website
- Staff Complaint Guidance
- BCH Staff Intranet
- Customer Complaint Communications.

This is stipulated in the BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 1 and 2) and the BCH Complaint Booklet.

There is clear message on this with ongoing publication of the complaints process to both customers and staff.

BCH have supported national campaigns on our website and social media channels such as the 'Make things Right' campaign and the 'Four Million Homes' campaign. The complaints process is also communicated with residents in newsletters, provided to all customers at least biannually.

Outcomes and complaint reports are published to outline the improvements made and lessons learnt from complaints and customer feedback.

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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • Reasonable Adjustments Policy	The Complaint Policy and Procedure is available on the BCH website as a PDF but also as a web page for web accessibility. There is also an accessibility page. The policy includes the 2 stage process, what happens at each step and timeframes for responding. Hard copies are available upon request. The Complaint Booklet was developed to summarise the complaint policy and process and was approved by our Customer Reading Panel as being easy to read and understand. The booklet is available online, in Coastal House Reception, @the Grange, at BCH roadshows and events, at Community Centres and upon request. Staff have access to language interpretation and alternative format print services to provide translation where needed.
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Website • Blackpool Council Website	This is stipulated in the BCH Policy and Procedure (Section 1). The complaint section of the BCH website has the published policy, along with links to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and the Housing Ombudsman Website. Blackpool Council's website also publishes the BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure.

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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet & form • BCH Customer Reasonable Adjustments Policy • BCH Authority to Act and Advocacy Policy • BCH Staff Complaint Handler Guidance • BCH Staff Intranet	This is stipulated in the BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 8, 10 and 15). BCH have a Reasonable Adjustments Policy and an Authority to Act and Advocacy Policy which supports residents to have representatives deal with their complaint or represent them regarding any housing or tenancy related matters.
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • Stage 1 and Stage 2 Complaint template letters • Stage 2 responses • BCH Facebook page • Newsletters	Reference to the Housing Ombudsman and customers right to access is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Sections 6, 14, 15, and 21). The Housing Ombudsman website and complaint handling code are direct links on the BCH website under the complaint section. Tenant and Leaseholder complaint templates letters have the Housing Ombudsman and contact details in the footer. Information is detailed in the BCH Complaint Booklet. The Housing Ombudsman Service is publicised on the BCH website, in BCH Newsletters and on Social Media.

SECTION 4: COMPLAINT HANDLING STAFF

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance • Housing Ombudsman Portal • Training Records	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 14). The Involvement and Communications Team are the designated team to record, allocate and manage complaints to ensure compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. All complainants are allocated a designated officer from within the team as their 'Complaint Officer'. The team allocate Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints to the 'Complaint Handler' who is the manager or Director of the service and monitor and co-ordinate timescales and outcomes. The Complaint Officers have all had training on the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, Housing Ombudsman Conflict Training and attend regular webinars and networking meetings. As an ALMO, the link officer with the Housing Ombudsman sits with Blackpool Council. The link officer allocates any Housing Ombudsman requests to the Involvement and Communications Team. Both the Link Officer and the Involvement and Communications Team have access to the Housing Ombudsman Portal.
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	• BCH Complaints Policy & Procedure	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and procedure (Section 14).

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

- BCH Complaints Policy & Procedure
- Housing Ombudsman Conflict Resolution Training
- Housing Ombudsman Micro Learning
- BCH Staff Complaint Guidance
- BCH Intranet Complaint Section
- iPool Online Training Courses
- Right First Time mandatory training programme
- BCH Customer Newsletters
- Team Meeting Minutes
- Staff Briefings

Learning from complaints is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Sections 1,2 and 19)

Complaints are centrally managed by the Involvement and Communications Team and additional officer and admin resource has been provided.

compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Code.

The Complaint Officers have all had training on the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, Housing Ombudsman Conflict Training and attend regular webinars and networking meetings.

Complaint cases are monitored by the Involvement and Communications Manager and Team Leader and responses are reviewed for quality and audit purposes.

All staff have undergone mandatory customer care and complaint training with a focus of 'Right First Time'.

Ongoing internal communications are produced to staff regarding the importance of complaint handling.

The Involvement and Communications Manager regularly attends Team meetings to discuss complaints and lessons learnt.

Complaint information, performance and lessons learnt recorded in quarterly reports and published on the website. Information is summarised and communicated in our all customer newsletters, in our annual report and published on our website.

SECTION 5: THE COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCESS

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	- BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure - BCH Complaint Booklet	BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure. Specific reference to residents not being treated differently if they complain is stipulated in Section 2.
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	- BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure - BCH Staff Compliant Guidance 'Right First Time' mandatory training	There are no informal or Stage 0 complaints. This is stipulated in the BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 13)
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	BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure	There are only 2 Stages in the BCH complaint process. This is stipulated in the BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 13, 14 and 15)

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	• BCH Complaints Policy & Procedure • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 1 and 2).
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	• BCH Complaints Policy & Procedure • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	Any complaints regarding contractors or third parties working on behalf of BCH will be logged and managed by BCH. (Section 1 and 2).
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	• BCH Complaints Policy & Procedure • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure – (Sections 14 and 15). Stage 1 and 2 response template letters.
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	• BCH Complaints Policy & Procedure	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Sections 14 and 15). The complaint definition is included in all Stage 1 and 2 acknowledgement letters. This confirms the aspect of the complaint we are responsible for. For elements within the complaint that are not the responsibility of BCH, this is stipulated in the acknowledgement letters, with an explanation and signposting where necessary.

5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.	Yes	• BCH Complaints Policy & Procedure • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Sections 14 and 15). BCH Staff Complaint Guidance includes specific sections on Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaint handling.
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	• BCH Complaints Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • MRI Housing Management System	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Sections 14 and 15).

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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Complaint Form • BCH Staff Intranet • Staff Complaint Guidance • Customer Reasonable Adjustments Policy • BCH Customer Advocacy Policy • BCH Website • MRI Housing Management System	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 10). Our Reasonable Adjustments Policy is published on our website. There is a specific section on the Staff Intranet relating to Reasonable Adjustments, which includes the policy and access to language interpretation and print services. When a complaint is taken, the customer (or their advocate) are asked if any reasonable adjustments are needed or if there are any specific communication needs. BCH have undergone a customer profiling exercise and all information is recorded on our MRI Housing Management system and kept updated accordingly. .
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 15).

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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • MRI Housing Management System	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 18). All complaints are centrally recorded and managed by the Involvement and Communications Team using the Feedback Module on the MRI Housing Management System. All complaint cases logged receive a unique reference number and all complaint information documentation relating to the case is recorded on the system against the specific reference number.
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • Staff Complaint Handler Guidance • BCH Staff Intranet • Right First Time Training • BCH Compensation Policy	Stage 1 formal complaints are investigated by Managers who have responsibility for the service and decisions. Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 14). Stage 2 complaints are considered by the Director of the Service or the Chief Operating Officer. Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 15) Complaint Handlers at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 have the authority and autonomy to act and make decisions and offer remedial action, apologies, good will gestures and financial compensation to resolve the complaint at any stage. They all have access to the BCH Compensation Policy and the Housing Ombudsman Guidance on Remedies.

5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable 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.	Yes	Unacceptable Behaviour Policy	BCH have an Unacceptable Behaviour Policy and this is published on our website and has been shared with all staff. (Referred to in Section 6)
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	- Customer Reasonable Adjustments Policy - Unacceptable Behaviour Policy	The BCH Customer Reasonable Adjustments Policy has been developed in line with the Equality Act 2020 and the Housing Ombudsman Reasonable adjustment and special considerations guidance. The BCH Unacceptable Behaviour Policy has been developed in line with the Housing Ombudsman Unacceptable user action policy.

SECTION 6: COMPLAINTS STAGES (STAGE 1)

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	• BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure • Staff Complaint Handler Guidance • Complaint Handler Checklist • BCH Staff Intranet • Right First Time Training • BCH Compensation Policy	Complaint Handlers all have the authority and autonomy to act and make decisions and offer remedial action, apologies, good will gestures and financial compensation to resolve the complaint at any stage. They all have access to the BCH Compensation Policy and the Housing Ombudsman Guidance on Remedies. All staff have undergone Right First Time Training with a focus on resolving issues at the first opportunity. All known vulnerabilities, communication needs or reasonable adjustments are logged as alerts so staff are aware and these factors can be taken into account to assess risk and respond or action matters accordingly.
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u>	Yes	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • MRI Housing Management System • BCH Website • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance • TSMs/ Reports	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 14) and reported on.

6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • MRI Housing Management System • BCH Website • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 14) and reported on.
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 14).
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 14).
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 14). Stage 1 and 2 Complaint Handler Guidance also details this.

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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Sections 14 and 15). Stage 1 and 2 Complaint Handler Guidance also details this.
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 14). Stage 1 and 2 Complaint Handler Guidance also details this.
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: 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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 14). Stage 1 and 2 Complaint Handler Guidance also details this.

SECTION 6: COMPLAINTS STAGES (STAGE 2)

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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 15).
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • MRI Housing Management system • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 15). Stage 1 and 2 Complaint Handler Guidance details this.
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 14). Stage 1 and 2 Complaint Handler Guidance also details this.

6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 15). Stage 1 and 2 Complaint Handler Guidance also details this.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance • BCH Service Standards	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 15). Stage 1 and 2 Complaint Handler Guidance details this. This is also a BCH service standard.
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 15). Stage 1 and 2 Complaint Handler Guidance also details this.

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.	Yes	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 15).
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 15). Stage 1 and 2 Complaint Handler Guidance details this.
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance • Complaint Action Tracker	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 15). Stage 1 and 2 Complaint Handler Guidance also details this.

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; 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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 15). Stage 1 and 2 Complaint Handler Guidance also details this.
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Booklet • BCH Website • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 15)

SECTION 7: PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	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: ■ Apologising; ■ Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; ■ Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons; ■ Taking action if there has been a delay; ■ Reconsidering or changing a decision; ■ Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; ■ Providing a financial remedy; ■ Changing policies, procedures or practices.	Yes	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Compensation Policy • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance • Housing Ombudsman Guidance on Remedies • Complaint Evaluation Forms	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 16). Stage 1 and 2 Complaint Handler Guidance also details this.
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Compensation Policy • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance • Housing Ombudsman Guidance on Remedies	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 16). Stage 1 and 2 Complaint Handler Guidance also details this.

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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Compensation Policy • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance • Housing Ombudsman Guidance on Remedies • MRI Housing Management System	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 16). Stage 1 and 2 Complaint Handler Guidance also details this. All remedies offered are recorded in the complaint management system, monitored and reported on.
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies	Yes	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Staff Complaint Guidance • BCH Staff Intranet	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 16). The BCH Staff Complaint Guidance refers to this and the link to the guidance is available on the BCH Staff Intranet under the complaints quick link.

SECTION 8: PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include: - the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. - 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; - any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman; - the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; - any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and, - any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.	Yes	- BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure - BCH Complaint Report - BCH Board Minutes - BCH Website	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 19).

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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Complaint Report • MRC and Board Champion Response • Board Minutes • BCH Website	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 19).
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 19).
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 19).
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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • BCH Business Continuity Plan	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 19).

SECTION 9: SCRUTINY & OVERSIGHT: CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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.	Yes	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • Quarterly Board and SMT Complaint Reports • Board Meeting Minutes • SMT meeting minutes • Customer Complaint Panel meeting minutes • Complaint Evaluations	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy and Procedure (Section 20). Following the closure of a complaint, Heads of Service (Stage 1) or Directors (Stage 2) complete a complaint evaluation which covers the root cause of the complaint, what was done to resolve it and wider actions needed to improve services or prevent reoccurrence. Complaint data is reported quarterly to the BCH Senior Management Team, the BCH Board and the Shareholder and the MRC, along with identified trends and areas that may need reviewing. Our Customer Complaint representatives meet quarterly to assess and review complaint information and scrutinise performance, with a focus on lessons learnt and recommended actions.

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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • Board Complaint Reports • Board Meeting Minutes • SMT meeting minutes • Customer Complaint Panel meeting minutes • Team Meeting Minutes • Staff Briefings • BCH Website (learning page in development) • Annual Report	As above in 9.1.
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	• BCH Website (learning page to be developed) • Annual Report • Customer Newsletters • BCH Website • BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • Board Complaint Reports • Board Meeting Minutes • SMT meeting minutes • Customer Complaint Panel meeting minutes	As above in 9.1. Complaint information and lessons learnt are also shared with customers in the Annual Report, newsletters and quarterly complaint reports, along with the annual complaint report are published on the BCH website.

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	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • SMT meeting minutes • Board Complaint Reports • Board Meeting Minutes	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy & Procedure (Section 20). The Director of Resources is appointed as the senior lead accountable for complaint handling.
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').	Yes	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • Board Complaint Reports • Board Meeting Minutes • SMT meeting minutes	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy & Procedure (Section 20). As an ALMO, the appointed MRC is Blackpool Council's Housing Portfolio Holder and there is an appointed Complaint Champion on the BCH Board.
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.	Yes	• BCH Complaint Policy & Procedure • Board Complaint Reports • Board Meeting Minutes	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy & Procedure (Section 20).

9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: - 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; - regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and, - annual complaints performance and service improvement report.	Yes	- Complaint Policy & Procedure - Quarterly SMT and Board Complaint Reports - Board Minutes - SMT Minutes - Annual Complaint and service improvement report	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy & Procedure (Section 20).
9.5	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to: - have a collaborative and cooperative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; - take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and, - act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.	Yes	- Complaint Policy & Procedure - Complaint Performance Reports - SMT Meeting Minutes - JOMM Minutes - Board Minutes - BCH Values - Expected Staff Behaviours - Staff Intranet - Job Descriptions - Employee Induction Programme - Customer Complaint Panel Minutes	This is stipulated in the Complaint Policy & Procedure (Section 20).



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INSPIRING PEOPLE TO BUILD **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**