

## The Beaumont Charity Complaints Procedure Self-Assessment Form – Housing Ombudsman Compliance

### Section 1 - Definition of a complaint

#### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence: Complaints Policy Ref (CP.XX), Supporting Documents, Commentary (If needed)
1.1	A complaint must be defined as:  '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.'	Yes	CP. 1.2
1.2	The resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must still be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.	Yes	CP. 1.3
1.3	... if further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter, or if the resident requests it, the issue must be logged as a complaint.	Yes	CP. 1.5
1.4	A landlord must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so.	Yes	CP. 2.1
1.5	A complaints policy must clearly set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered, and these circumstances should be fair and reasonable to residents.	Yes	CP. 2.2
1.6	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.	Yes	CP. 2.4

## Section 2 - Definition of a service request

### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence: Complaints Policy Ref (CP.XX), Supporting Documents, Commentary (If needed)
1.1	A service request must be defined as:  'a requirement to put something right (e.g., to carry out routine maintenance etc.)'	Yes	CP. 1.4
1.2	Landlords must recognise the difference between a <b>service request</b> and a <b>complaint</b> . This must be set out in their complaints policy. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.	Yes	CP. 1.4
1.3	... if further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter, or if the resident requests it, the issue must be logged as a complaint.	Yes	CP 1.5

### Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence: Complaints Policy Ref (CP.XX), Supporting Documents, Commentary (If needed)
1.4	Landlords should recognise the difference between a <b>service request</b> , where a resident may be unhappy with a <b>situation</b> that they wish to have rectified, and a <b>complaint</b> about the <b>service</b> they have/have not received.	Yes	CP. 1.2
1.5	Survey feedback may not necessarily need to be treated as a complaint, though, where possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue their dissatisfaction as a complaint if they wish to.	Yes	CP. 1.5  As an almshouse charity we do not have tenants. Our residents are legal beneficiaries appointed under licence to occupy the accommodation. As such, surveys for the Tenant Satisfaction Measures Standard do not apply.

## Section 2 - Accessibility and awareness

### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence: Complaints Policy Ref (CP.XX), Supporting Documents, Commentary (If needed)
2.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which residents can make a complaint such as in person, over the telephone, in writing, by email and digitally. While the Ombudsman recognises that it may not be feasible for a landlord to use all of the potential channels, there must be more than one route of access into the complaints system.	Yes	CP. 3.2 Resident Handbook Complaint Section
2.3	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the number of stages involved, what will happen at each stage and the timeframes for responding.	Yes	<b>Resident Handbook</b> Complaint Section. The detailed policy is also available in the handbook.
2.4	Landlord websites, if they exist, must include information on how to raise a complaint. The complaints policy and process must be easy to find on the website.	Yes	Residents do not use our website to access information. Its purpose is to create awareness of the housing. However, this complaints assessment, the report on complaints and the charity's complaint policy are all on the website in the about section.
2.5	Landlords must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and may need to adapt normal policies, procedures, or processes to accommodate an individual's needs. Landlords must satisfy themselves that their policy sets out how they will respond to reasonable adjustments requests in line with the Equality Act and that complaints handlers have had appropriate training to deal with such requests.	Yes	CP. 3.1, CP. 3.2, CP. 5.1
2.6	Landlords must publicise the complaints policy and process, the Complaint Handling Code and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme in leaflets, posters, newsletters, online and as part of regular correspondence with residents.	Yes	Membership is on <b>letterheads</b> and handbook
2.7	Landlords must provide residents with contact information for the Ombudsman as part of its regular correspondence with residents.	Yes	This is on the template for letters
2.8	Landlords must provide early advice to residents regarding their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service throughout their complaint, not only when the landlord's complaints process is exhausted.	Yes	CP. 4.4

### Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence: Complaints Policy Ref (CP.XX), Supporting Documents, Commentary (If needed)
2.2	Where a landlord has set up channels to communicate with its residents via social media, then it should expect to receive complaints via those channels. Policies should contain details of the steps that will be taken when a complaint is received via social media and how confidentiality and privacy will be maintained.	Yes	We do not use Social Media Channels to communicate information to residents.

### Section 3 - Complaint handling personnel

#### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence: Complaints Policy Ref (CP.XX), Supporting Documents, Commentary (If needed)
3.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling to ensure complaints receive the necessary attention, and that these are reported to the governing body. This Code will refer to that person or team as the "complaints officer".	Yes	The Clerk is the Complaints officer unless the complaint concerns the Clerk when the Chairman of the trustees will act as the Complaints officer.
3.2	...the complaint handler appointed must have appropriate complaint handling skills and no conflicts of interest.	Yes	As trustees change there is ongoing work to improve the skills of trustees. The training trustees require is currently being reviewed as part of the resilience and sustainability development plan due to be presented in November. The Skillset of those who manage the complaints process is adequate.

#### Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence: Complaints Policy Ref (CP.XX), Supporting Documents, Commentary (If needed)
3.3	Complaint handlers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be able to act sensitively and fairly</li> <li>• be trained to handle complaints and deal with distressed and upset residents</li> <li>• have access to staff at all levels to facilitate quick resolution of complaints</li> <li>• have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes quickly and fairly.</li> </ul>	Yes	The Clerk is in frequent contact with residents and their next of kin and deals with sensitive issues on an ongoing basis. The Clerk is the only agent working directly on behalf of the trustees and has autonomy to quickly resolve issues raised by residents.

## Section 4 - Complaint handling principles

### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence: Complaints Policy Ref (CP.XX), Supporting Documents, Commentary (If needed)
4.1	Any decision to try and resolve a concern must be taken in agreement with the resident and a landlord's audit trail/records should be able to demonstrate this. Landlords must ensure that efforts to resolve a resident's concerns do not obstruct access to the complaints procedure or result in any unreasonable delay. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'pre-complaint stage') as this causes unnecessary confusion for residents. When a complaint is made, it must be acknowledged and logged at stage one of the complaints procedure <b>within five days of receipt</b> .	Yes	CP. 5.1-5.3
4.2	Within the complaint acknowledgement, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	Yes	CP. 5.3
4.6	A complaint investigation must be conducted in an impartial manner.	Yes	CP. 5.5, 5.6
4.7	The complaint handler must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deal with complaints on their merits</li> <li>• act independently and have an open mind</li> <li>• take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest</li> <li>• consider all information and evidence carefully</li> <li>• keep the complaint confidential as far as possible, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter.</li> </ul>	Yes	CP. 5.7
4.11	Landlords must adhere to any reasonable arrangements agreed with residents in terms of frequency and method of communication	Yes	CP. 5.3, 5.4, 6.1-6.5
4.12	The resident and, if applicable, any staff member who is the subject of the complaint, must also be given a fair chance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set out their position</li> <li>• comment on any adverse findings before a final decision is made.</li> </ul>	Yes	CP. 5.5
4.13	A landlord must include in its complaints policy its timescales for a resident to request escalation of a complaint.	Yes	CP. 5.4
4.14	A landlord must not unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure and must have clear and valid reasons for taking that course of action. Reasons for declining to escalate a complaint must be clearly set out in a landlord's complaints policy and must be the same as the reasons for not accepting a complaint.	Yes	CP. 6.1

<b>4.15</b>	A full record must be kept of the complaint, any review and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties and any reports or surveys prepared.	Yes	CP. 5.3, 7.5
<b>4.18</b>	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives when pursuing a complaint.	Yes	CP. 2.5 <b>Anti Social Behaviour Policy</b> Handbook – Appointment Pages 8 & 9

#### Best practice 'should' requirements

<b>Code section</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes/No</b>	<b>Evidence: Complaints Policy Ref (CP.XX), Supporting Documents, Commentary (If needed)</b>
<b>4.3</b>	Landlords should manage residents' expectations from the outset, being clear where a desired outcome is unreasonable or unrealistic	Yes	CP. 1.7c
<b>4.4</b>	A complaint should be resolved at the earliest possible opportunity, having assessed what evidence is needed to fully consider the issues, what outcome would resolve the matter for the resident and whether there are any urgent actions required.	Yes	CP. 5.4, 5.9
<b>4.5</b>	Landlords should give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord where this is reasonable.	Yes	CP. 3.2
<b>4.8</b>	Where a key issue of a complaint relates to the parties' legal obligations landlords should clearly set out their understanding of the obligations of both parties.	Yes	CP. 5.8
<b>4.9</b>	Communication with the resident should not generally identify individual members of staff or contractors.	Yes	The term Clerk, Trustee or Contractor is used where possible.
<b>4.10</b>	Landlords should keep residents regularly updated about the progress of the investigation.	Yes	CP. 5.4, 6.2, 6.5
<b>4.16</b>	Landlords should seek feedback from residents in relation to the landlord's complaint handling as part of the drive to encourage a positive complaint and learning culture.	Yes	Residents will be asked for their feedback on the revised complaints policy when it was issued to them.
<b>4.17</b>	Landlords should recognise the impact that being complained about can have on future service delivery. Landlords should ensure that staff are supported and engaged in the complaints process, including the learning that can be gained	Yes	Support for the Clerk is part of the resilience and sustainability development plan due to be presented in November.
<b>4.19</b>	Any restrictions placed on a resident's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be appropriate to their needs and should demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	Anti Social Policy Handbook

## Section 5 - Complaint stages

### Mandatory 'must' requirements

#### Stage 1

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence: Complaints Policy Ref (CP.XX), Supporting Documents, Commentary (If needed)
5.1	Landlords must respond to the complaint <b>within 10 working days</b> of the complaint being logged. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	CP. 5.3, 5.9
5.5	A complaint response must be sent to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned expeditiously with regular updates provided to the resident.	Yes	CP. 5.4
5.6	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	CP. 5.7(d), 5.8, 5.12
5.8	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage one in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the complaint stage</li> <li>• the decision on the complaint</li> <li>• the reasons for any decisions made</li> <li>• the details of any remedy offered to put things right</li> <li>• details of any outstanding actions</li> <li>• details of how to escalate the matter to stage two if the resident is not satisfied with the answer</li> </ul>	Yes	CP. 5.12

## Stage 2

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence: Complaints Policy Ref (CP.XX), Supporting Documents, Commentary (If needed)
5.9	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage one it must be progressed to stage two of the landlord's procedure, unless an exclusion ground now applies. In instances where a landlord declines to escalate a complaint it must clearly communicate in writing its reasons for not escalating as well as the resident's right to approach the Ombudsman about its decision.	Yes	CP. 6.1 Appeals are always permitted.
5.10	On receipt of the escalation request, landlords must set out their understanding of issues outstanding and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	Yes	CP. 6.6
5.11	Landlords must only escalate a complaint to stage two once it has completed stage one and at the request of the resident.	Yes	CP. 6.1
5.12	The person considering the complaint at stage two, must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage one.	Yes	CP. 6.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3
5.13	Landlords must respond to the stage two complaint <b>within 20 working days</b> of the complaint being escalated. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	CP. 6.5
5.16	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage two in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the complaint stage</li> <li>• the complaint definition</li> <li>• the decision on the complaint</li> <li>• the reasons for any decisions made</li> <li>• the details of any remedy offered to put things right</li> <li>• details of any outstanding actions</li> <li>• and if this was the final stage, details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied.</li> </ul>	Yes	CP. 6.6



## Section 6 - Putting things right

### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply Yes/No	Evidence: Complaints Policy Ref (CP.XX), Supporting Documents, Commentary (If needed)
6.1	Effective dispute resolution requires a process designed to resolve complaints. Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right.	Yes	CP. 7.1
6.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the extent of any service failures and the level of detriment caused to the resident as a result. A landlord must carefully manage the expectations of residents and not promise anything that cannot be delivered or would cause unfairness to other residents.	Yes	CP. 7.2
6.5	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	CP. 7.3
6.6	In awarding compensation, a landlord must consider whether any statutory payments are due, if any quantifiable losses have been incurred, the time and trouble a resident has been put to as well as any distress and inconvenience caused.	Yes	CP. 7.4

### Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence: Complaints Policy Ref (CP.XX), Supporting Documents, Commentary (If needed)
6.3	Landlords should look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether anything needs to be 'put right' in terms of process or systems to the benefit of all residents.	Yes	CP. 7.1
6.7	In some cases, a resident may have a legal entitlement to redress. The landlord should still offer a resolution where possible, obtaining legal advice as to how any offer of resolution should be worded.	Yes	CP. 7.4

## Section 7 - Continuous learning and improvement

### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence: Complaints Policy Ref (CP.XX), Supporting Documents, Commentary (If needed)
7.2	Accountability and transparency are integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints in their annual report and more frequently to their residents, staff and scrutiny panels.	Yes	Almshouses are not required to produce an annual report for residents. The Clerk provides a detailed <b>Clerk's Report</b> quarterly which notes and responds to property and other issues, demonstrating how they are dealt with.

### Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence: Complaints Policy Ref (CP.XX), Supporting Documents, Commentary (If needed)
7.3	A member of the governing body should be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This role will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight to the governing body on the landlord's complaint handling performance.	Yes	The Chairman of the Trustees is the complaint lead on the board of trustees
7.4	As a minimum, governing bodies should receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular updates on the volume, categories and outcome of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance including compliance with the Ombudsman's orders</li> <li>Regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling,</li> <li>The annual performance report produced by the Ombudsman, where applicable</li> <li>Individual complaint outcomes where necessary, including where the Ombudsman made findings of severe maladministration or referrals to regulatory bodies. The implementation of management responses should be tracked to ensure they are delivered to agreed timescales. The annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code for scrutiny and challenge.</li> </ul>	Yes	Should a complaint be received, this would appear in the Clerk's Report alongside service requests. There is also a Health and Safety Plan which is reviewed every meeting. Some service requests will also appear on this plan.
7.5	Any themes or trends should be assessed by senior management to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks or policies and procedures that require revision. They should also be used to inform staff and contractor training.	Yes	The Clerks quarterly reports contain property or other issues raised by residents and the action taken. This is considered alongside the Health and Safety Development Plan. A quinquennial report provides an independent report. Policies are updated if it was felt it was needed.
7.6	Landlords should have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all employees that reflects the need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments</li> <li>take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints rather than blaming others</li> <li>act within the Professional Standards for engaging with complaints as set by the Chartered Institute of Housing.</li> </ul>	Yes	As a small almshouse charity, we do not have teams or departments and are not members of the Chartered Institute of Housing. Our culture aligns to the Almshouse Association's Standards of Almshouse Management. Is it evidenced in a collaborative and supportive relationship between the Clerk and trustees

## Section 8 - Self-assessment and compliance

### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence: Complaints Policy Ref (CP.XX), Supporting Documents, Commentary (If needed)
8.1	Landlords must carry out an annual self-assessment against the Code to ensure their complaint handling remains in line with its requirements.	Yes	This document. The annual complaints and service improvement report will be considered in conjunction with the production of the trustees report for the annual accounts from 2025 onwards.
8.2	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure and/or change in procedures.	Yes	There have been no restructuring or changes in procedure that affect procedures
8.3	Following each self-assessment, a landlord must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• report the outcome of their self-assessment to their governing body.</li><li>• publish the outcome of their assessment on their website if they have one, or otherwise make accessible to residents</li><li>• include the self-assessment in their annual report section on complaints handling performance</li></ul>	Yes	This assessment process and its outcomes is documented in the minutes of the September meeting of the Full Trustees each year. A reference to this process and its outcomes will be added to the annual accounts ending March 2025 and successive years as part of the trustees report. The accounts have already been produced and signed for the year ending March 24.

Self-assessment completed by Board of Trustees at Charity Name



Mr Ray Kerr

Chairman DATE:24/09/2024