

Appendix 1 Complaint handling code self-assessment* April 2025

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / Explanation
1.2 (code provisions start at 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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 1) • Training and Information available to all SYHA staff on our Base intranet.	Point 1 of our complaints policy uses this definition of 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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Points 1 & 3) • Training and Information available to all SYHA staff on our Base intranet.	Our Complaints policy guides how we work when dealing with complaints. All expressions of dissatisfaction are treated within our policy, which includes issues raised via social media. Our staff have access to training and information to guide them. Areas of further development are: - To develop a new Complaints Training course for all staff

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				- To develop an internal communications plan for complaints information for staff.
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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Points 2, 8 & 9) • A new Feedback Service Category on our IT Housing Management system.	Our complaints policy describes the difference between a service request and a complaint and how we will respond to them. We have strengthened this with a new 'Feedback' category on our IT Housing Management system. Areas of further development are: - To develop a new Complaints Training course for all staff - To continue to find ways to improve monitoring on our IT Housing Management system. - To clarify any wording in our complaints policy that avoids any confusion in this area.
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	Yes	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Points 5 & 9) • Training and Information available to all SYHA staff on our Base intranet.	Our complaints policy describes our approach to handling a complaint and continuing work on a service request. Areas of further development are: - to develop a new Complaints Training Course for all staff.

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	not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.			
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	• Survey Process • Survey Guidance	We have a series of transactional surveys, and guidance is available that describes how information about complaints must be shared when carrying out a surveys. Our surveys are carried out by our Customer Experience Team who will directly follow up any identified issues.

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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Points 25 & 26) • Training and Information available to all SYHA staff on our Base intranet.	We accept all complaints unless they are those described in our policy. If we refuse to accept or escalate a complaint we will explain our reasons. We ensure all our staff have access to training and information about our complaints process. Areas of further development are:

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				- To find ways to improve recording in our IT Housing management system.
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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 25)	We accept all complaints unless they are those described in our policy.
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	Yes	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 7)	Our complaints policy sets out that we will accept complaints within 12 months of the issue happening. Complaints raised beyond this period are considered and we may apply discretion on a case-by-case basis.

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	time limit where there are good reasons to do so.			
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	• Our Complaints Policy (Point 26)	If we do not accept a complaint our Customer Experience Team will lead on discussing the reason(s) why with the customer and will document the decision. We will let the customer know if they have the right to take the decision to the Housing Ombudsman.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	• Our Complaints Policy (Point 25)	We will consider each complaint on its own merits. If we exclude a complaint our Customer Experience Team will discuss the reasons why with the customer. A record of excluded complaints is kept and updated by our Customer Experience Team.

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	Yes		

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	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.		• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Points 4, 23 & 24) • Our new Vulnerability Policy • Our 'Tell us More' data collection campaign.	Our complaints policy details the range of ways that customers can make a complaint. We use Equality Impact Assessment when we produce and review policies. SYHA's new Vulnerability Policy is due to be launched in Summer 2025. This details how we can consider customer vulnerabilities and reasonable adjustments that they made need to access SYHA services. Our 'Tell us More' data collection campaign will ask customers relevant questions so that their needs or reasonable adjustments can be logged and acted on.
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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 4) • Training and Information available to all SYHA staff on our Base intranet.	Our Policy describes how complaints can be raised in a variety of ways and with any member of staff. Our Customer Experience Team are able to easily receive all complaints regardless of the method they are made.

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				All staff are supported by our training and complaints resources on our intranet. Areas of further development are: - To develop a new Complaints Training course for all staff - To develop an internal communications plan for complaints information for staff. - To update our Complaints Policy to specifically state that complaints shared via social media will be accepted.
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	• <u>Our Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report</u> • ELT and Board reporting on Complaints performance. • Staff Training and Information.	Our Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report demonstrates that we analyse the volume of complaints and root causes to ensure our processes are working well. Our Executive Team and Board receive regular information about complaints, which explains our performance and that higher volumes of complaints must not be seen as negative. This message is also conveyed to staff.

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				We have seen our volume of complaints rise in 2024/25, and we currently benchmark above the median on complaints per 1000 properties in our Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).
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 Complaints Policy (Point 4 and the Flowchat 'How a Complaint is Handled') • Our Complaints Website Information	Our complaints policy is available on our website and on request a paper version and large print version is available. The flowchart on the final page of the policy describes our two-stage complaints process, including timescales for response and what can be expected at each stage. Our website contains information about complaints that is clear and easy to read.
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	• Our Complaints Policy (Points 6, 18, 21 & 31)	Our complaints policy and information about the Ombudsman and Code is publicised on our website.

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			• Our Complaints Website Information	We also share the Ombudsman's contact details at key points through the complaints process to raise awareness of the service and the advice they can offer.
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	• Our Complaints Policy (Point 3) • Staff Training Materials • Our new Vulnerability Policy • Our 'Tell us More' data collection campaign.	Our complaints policy details how we can accept complaints from an advocate or representative. Staff are trained on how to record and be aware of customers who require a representative, and this will be further supported through our new Vulnerability policy. Our 'Tell us More' data collection campaign will ask customers relevant questions so that customers who require an advocate are more easily identified and receive help to set this up.
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	• Our Complaints Policy (Points 11, 18 & 21) • Our Complaints Website Information	Our complaints policy describes how and when we share information about the Ombudsman. When we respond to a complaint and review, information about how to access the Ombudsman is shared.

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				We also share details about the Ombudsman service if we are unable to provide a response within timescale. Details of the Ombudsman service is available on the complaints page of our website.
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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	Organisation chart and job descriptions	We have a dedicated Customer Experience Team that oversees complaints handling, including liaising with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body. In addition, we are trialling placing a dedicated resource based in the service area that receives the most complaints.
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	Yes	- Staff Training Package - Information for all staff available on our Intranet.	Complaints owners have access to colleagues at all levels across the business to facilitate dealing with complaints.

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	autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.		Teams Channels are used to coordinate complaint actions & responses.	Complaint owners are trained and have the autonomy to resolve complaints.
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	- Staff Training Package - Organisation chart and job descriptions - Our Learning Outcomes quarterly report. - Regular meetings to consider learning outcomes.	Staff who handle complaints receive training and support from our dedicated Customer Experience Team. This includes producing a learning outcomes report and regular meetings to consider learning from complaints. Our internal information on our SharePoint page and other communications channels promotes a culture of learning. Areas of further development are: - To develop a new Complaints Training course for all staff - To develop an internal communications plan for complaints information for staff.

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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	Our Complaints Policy	There is one single complaint policy that guides how to handle complaints.
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 Complaints Policy (Points 8 & 9)	There are no additional stages in our policy. Area for improvement: - revise the policy flowchart to be clearer that the service request /'put it right' options are not additional stages.
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	Our Complaints Policy (Points 11, 15 & 20, and the Flowchart 'How a complaint is handled')	There are two stages to our policy, complaint (stage 1) and review (stage 2).
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage,	Yes	Our Complaints Policy	All our complaints are handled by SYHA in line with our complaints policy.

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	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.		• Our Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report	Contractor/Third party complaints are monitored and reported on – as can be seen in our Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement report.
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	• Our Complaints Policy • Our Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report	All our complaints are handled by SYHA in line with our complaints policy. Contractor/Third party complaints are monitored and reported on – as can be seen in our Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement report. In 2025/26 we will review our agreements with contractors and escalation routes to ensure that complaints performance for third parties is handled consistently and in line with our Complaints Policy.
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	Yes	• Our Complaints Policy (Points 10 & 17) • Complaints Online Form	Customer Advisors in our Contact team use a webform to make sure the right information is collected when a complaint (stage 1) is received.

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	complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.			Our Customer Experience Team then log all complaints, clarify any details with the customer if necessary and send the acknowledgement including our understanding of the complaint. Templates are provided for this to be used as appropriate. Reviews (Stage 2) are dealt with by our Customer Experience Team. They check and clarify details with the customer and send the acknowledgement including our understanding of the review.
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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Points 10 & 17)	Our Customer Experience Team clarify where necessary which elements we are looking into when they acknowledge complaints and reviews. Templates are provided for this to be used as appropriate
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: - deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; - give the resident a fair chance to set out their position;	Yes	• <u>Complaints Online Form</u> • Staff Training Package • Complaint Handling Form	Our online form ensures customers can set out their position, which can be further clarified throughout the process. Complaint owners and Reviewers receive training that describes their

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	c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.			role and how to best handle complaints. These points are also on our internal complaints handling form that complaint owners follow.
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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Points 11 & 18) • Staff Training Package • New Extension process. • Regular monitoring updates.	Complaint owners receive training and support to make sure they know the steps they must follow if responding to a complaint or review that will fall outside the timescales set out in the code, and how this should be recorded in our IT Housing Management system. To strengthen this, we have recently implemented a new process for ensuring extensions are applied and agreed appropriately. This includes sign off at a senior level. Our Customer Experience Team reviews complaints that fall outside of the timescale to make sure they follow the code.
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any	Yes	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Points 23 & 24)	Our complaints policy details our approach.

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	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.		• Our new Vulnerability Policy • Our 'Tell us More' data collection campaign.	SYHA's Vulnerability Policy (Being introduced in Summer 2025) details how we can consider customer vulnerabilities and reasonable adjustments that they made need to access SYHA services. Our 'Tell us More' data collection campaign will ask customers relevant questions so that their needs or reasonable adjustments can be logged and acted on.
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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Points 15. 25 & 30)	Our complaints policy guides how we work when dealing with escalations. To date we have never refused to escalate a complaint. If we were to refuse to escalate a complaint, our Customer Experience Team lead on explaining the reason and documenting it.
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,	Yes	• Our IT Housing Management System (Cx) • Our Document Management	We keep a full record of all complaints in our IT housing management system and electronic document management system.

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	correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.		system (Documotive – EDRM)	Satisfaction surveys relating to the complaint are also kept in our IT housing management system.
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	• Our Complaints Policy (Points 28 & 29) • Our Compensation Policy • Employee Training package	Our complaints policy and our compensation policy describe how we handle remedies and compensation. All roles that deal with complaints and reviews receive training 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	• Our Complaints Policy (Point 30) • Our Unreasonable Behaviour Guidelines • Our internal unreasonable behaviour guidance for staff	Our complaints policy describes our approach and includes a link to unreasonable behaviour guidelines. We also have internal guidance for staff on how to assess and manage any incidences of unreasonable behaviour.
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 Complaints Policy (Point 30) • Our Unreasonable Behaviour Guidelines • Our internal unreasonable	Our policy and guidelines describe our approach. The process we use to respond to incidences of unreasonable behaviour involves considering mitigating factors to ensure that appropriate action is

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			behaviour guidance for staff • Our new Vulnerability Policy	taken, which includes demonstrating regard for the provision of the Equality Act. Our new vulnerability policy will also strengthen our approach to ensure that we understand our customer needs and ensure fair access to our services.
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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	• Staff Training package • Complaints Handling Performance Monitoring • Maintenance dedicated role trial.	Complaint owners receive training and support to emphasise responding in a timely way. Performance Management is in place to monitor response times, and to pick up and deal with exceptions. In addition, we are trialling placing a dedicated resource based in the service area that receives the most complaints to facilitate early responses, and to enhance our

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				identification of complaints that can be resolved at an early stage.
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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 10)	All complaints are acknowledged by our Customer Experience Team within 5 working days of being received. Area of further development: - to improve our monitoring options and reporting via our IT housing management system in 2025/26.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 11) • Complaints Handling Performance Monitoring	Our complaints policy guides how we aim to give a full response within 10 working days of a complaint being acknowledged. Our performance is monitored and reported on regularly, including to our Complaints working group.
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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 11) • Complaints Handling Performance Monitoring • Extension Monitoring Sheet • New Extensions process	Our complaints policy describes how extensions must be dealt with by complaint owners. Complaint owners receive training and support to ensure the policy is followed.

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				Our Customer Experience team monitors and documents that the policy is being followed. We have recently implemented a new process for ensuring extensions are applied and agreed appropriately – to strengthen this. Area of further development: - to improve how extensions are recorded in our IT housing management system. - Improved reporting to provide assurance we are meeting this timeframe
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	• Our Complaints Policy (Point 11) • New Extensions process	Our complaints policy sets out our approach. Our new extensions policy and training and support for all complaints owners ensure that extensions are applied properly. Areas of further development: - we will improve our standard templates that can be used when informing customers of

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				extensions to ensure that contact details are consistently shared. - Introduce quality assurance to make sure when an extension is used complaint owners are meeting this requirement.
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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 11) • Staff Training package • Monitoring of actions • Data provided to the Complaints Working Group	Our complaints policy guides how outstanding actions to resolve a complaint will be shared in our complaint response but must not delay our response. Complaint owners received training to make sure we are consistent in our approach. Our Customer Experience Team assist complaint owners to track outstanding actions and keep a record of these. An area of improvement will be to improve tracking actions in our IT Housing Management System.
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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 13) • Staff Training package • Guidance and templates	Our complaints policy sets out the elements which will be included in our response. We strengthen this with staff training, which includes sample good practice

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				letters and templates that aid responses. We have introduced a quality assurance process to regularly audit responses.
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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 12)	Our complaints policy describes when we will include additional complaints to an existing complaint and when we will log a new complaint.
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;	Yes	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 13) • Staff Training package • Guidance and templates	Our complaints policy sets out the elements which will be included in our response along with information about how to escalate if the customer is unhappy with our response. Complaint owners are trained on writing response letters and good practice resources and templates are available for them to use.

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	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.			
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Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / Explanation
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	• Our Complaints Policy (Point 15)	Our complaints policy describes the escalation process and customers are informed about it in the response to their complaint. When a customer expresses dissatisfaction with a complaint response we always escalate to the next stage for their complaint to be reviewed.
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	• Our Complaints Policy (Point 17)	Our complaints policy guides how we acknowledge requests for complaints to be escalated to review (Stage 2). Our Customer Experience Team record and acknowledge all reviews

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				within 5 working days of a request to escalate. The acknowledgement confirms we have received and recorded the review.
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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 17)	When a customer is unhappy with the response our Customer Experience Team will contact them to find out the reason/s why. However, the complaint would still proceed to review (stage 2) even if the customer does not provide any reasons.
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 16)	A review (Stage 2) is always completed by a role that is at lead level or more senior than the complaint owner, and where possible from a different department.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 18) • Complaints Handling Performance Monitoring	Our complaints policy guides how we aim to give a full response within 20 working days of a review (stage 2) being acknowledged. Our Customer Experience team monitors and tracks all reviews.

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				Performance data is shared to all relevant departments and at our complaints working group.
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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 18) • New Extensions Process	Our complaints policy sets out the steps we will take if we are unable to respond within 20 working days. Extensions are monitored and tracked by our Customer Experience Team. Our new extensions process and training and support for all complaints owners ensure that extensions are applied properly.
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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 18) • New Extensions Process	Our Customer Experience Team facilitate reviews and work closely with reviewers including making sure any extensions are communicated correctly. Our new extensions policy and training and support for all complaints owners ensure that extensions are applied properly. Areas of further development: - we will improve our standard templates that can be used when informing customers of

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				extensions to ensure that contact details are consistently shared. - Introduce quality assurance to make sure when an extension is used complaint owners are meeting this requirement.
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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 18) • Staff Training package • Monitoring of actions • Data provided to the Complaints Working Group	Our complaints policy sets out we will respond when the outcome of a review (Stage 2) is known, and outstanding actions will have a named owner and be tracked. Complaint owners received training to make sure we are consistent in our approach. Our Customer Experience Team assist complaint owners to track outstanding actions and record these in our monitoring systems.
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	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 19) • Staff Training package • Guidance and templates	Our complaints policy sets out the elements which will be included in our response. We will address each point raised in the complaint, including clear reasons for the decisions we have made.

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				We strengthen this with staff training, which includes support to write responses, sample good practice letters and templates that aid responses. We have recently introduced a quality assurance process to regularly audit responses.
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: - the complaint stage; - the complaint definition; - the decision on the complaint; - the reasons for any decisions made; - the details of any remedy offered to put things right; - details of any outstanding actions; and - details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.	Yes	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Point 19) • Staff Training package • Guidance and templates	Our complaints policy sets out the elements which will be included in our response along with information about how to escalate if the customer is unhappy with our response. Reviewers receive training to make sure these points are confirmed when responding to a complaint. Reviewers also receive support on writing response letters and good practice resources and templates are available for them to use.

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6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Points 16 & 20)	Our complaint policy describes how a complaint review is our final response. Within our review process, a Director will agree and sign off the review response.
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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 delay; • Reconsidering or changing a decision; • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • Providing a financial remedy;	Yes	• <u>Our Complaints Policy</u> (Points 8, 13 & 19) • Staff Training Package • Information on our Intranet	Our complaints policy describes how we take a proactive approach when we hear dissatisfaction. Our staff training and information resources embed and encourage complaint owners on how to provide a good quality response with practical actions to a complaint.

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	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 Complaints Policy (Points 29) Our Compensation Policy	Our complaints policy sets out how the impact of a fault should be considered by the complaint owner or complaint reviewer and may involve compensating a customer. We have a compensation policy and internal guidelines for calculating discretionary compensation to support consistency. We plan to review our compensation policy in 2025/26 and include this in our new training plan.
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 Complaints Policy (Points 13 & 19)	Our complaints policy describes how any remedies must be part of our response, including timescales and how we will share updates. Area of Improvement: - We will review how our IT Housing Management System tracks remedies.

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7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	• <u>Our Compensation Policy</u> • Internal guidance for staff on calculating compensation is available on our Intranet	We provide staff with information that takes into account guidance issued by the Ombudsman. We plan to review our compensation policy in 2025/26.
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Section 8: Self-assessment, Reporting & Compliance

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;	Yes	• <u>Our Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report</u> • <u>Our Annual Self-Assessment</u>	Our Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report and our Annual Self-Assessment was approved in June 2024. Our June 2025 report will replace and update this when published. The Boards (SYHA & Alliance Housing) will continue to receive an annual report on complaints. We have used the code requirements and guidance to structure our report and publish this on our website in the links provided in the Evidence column.

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	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.			
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 section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes	• <u>Our Board response to the Annual Report</u>	Reports are provided annually at Board meetings. The Board response to the latest Annual Report can be found on our website. Members of the SYHA Board are on the Alliance Housing Board. The Board response covers SYHA and Alliance Housing.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	• HO complaint self-assessment responsibilities guide	Our Senior Lead for complaints is responsible for making sure self-assessments are carried out when required. A recent Complaints Audit has been commissioned and undertaken to identify any improvements required in

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				the complaints policy and procedures and to provide additional assurance to the board.
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	HO complaint self-assessment responsibilities guide	Our Senior Lead for complaints is responsible for making sure self-assessments are carried out when required. Recent decisions received by SYHA from the Housing Ombudsman have not recommended this, but we would be committed to acting on this if required.
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	HO complaint self-assessment responsibilities guide	Our Senior Lead for complaints is responsible for informing customers and the Housing Ombudsman if we are unable to comply with the code and to communicate timescales. Our Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is in place.

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	Yes	Our Annual Complaints Performance &	Our Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement report details our approach to learning.

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	improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.		<u>Service Improvement Report</u> • <u>Our Learning from Complaints Website link</u> details examples of changes we have made. • Our Learning Outcomes quarterly report. • Regular meetings to consider learning outcomes.	We also publish learning from complaints with specific examples on our website. We capture learning outcomes for each complaint on our IT Housing Management system, and each service reviews these to identify service improvements. We hold regular meetings to consider learning from complaints. An area of further development will be to continue to develop our IT Housing Management system to improve our monitoring of learning outcomes.
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	• <u>Our Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report</u> • <u>Our Learning from Complaints</u> details examples of changes we have made.	Our Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement report details our approach to learning and we also publish learning from complaints with specific examples on our website. Our Executive Team and Customer Experience Team champion a positive complaints-handling culture. Areas of further development are:

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			• Our Learning Outcomes quarterly report. • Regular meetings to consider learning outcomes. • Our Complaints Review Process • Training & Guidance provided for staff	- To continue to develop our IT Housing Management system to improve our monitoring of learning outcomes. - To develop a new Complaints Training course for all staff - To develop an internal communications plan for complaints information for staff.
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	• <u>Our Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report</u> • <u>Our Learning from Complaints</u> details examples of changes we have made. • Complaints Annual Board Report • Customer Voice Meetings and reports.	Our Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement report details our approach to learning and we share examples of how we have learnt from complaints on our website. We provide our Board with an annual report about complaints, as well as other regular updates, such as customer stories and any Housing Ombudsman feedback or specific learning. We provide responsible managers with learning outcomes as part of our Customer Voice meetings and reports.

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				Our newly emerging Customer Committee will also receive regular information about learning from complaints.
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	Head of Customer Experience identified and in post.	The Head of Customer Experience is the suitable senior lead person accountable for Complaint Handling. This person uses the framework set out in this self-assessment to assess and report on themes and trends. A recent Complaints Audit has been commissioned and undertaken to identify any improvements required in the complaints policy and procedures.
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	A member of the Board (Pam Hankinson) has been identified as the MRC.	The MRC receives an induction into complaints handling. The MRC has a dual role to report to both Boards (SYHA and Alliance Housing)
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	Yes	MRC Induction Programme	The MRC receives an induction into complaints handling.

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	handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.		- Regular meetings with the Customer Experience Team - Regular Board agenda item for the MRC	They have access to staff and the Senior Lead for complaints handling, and our Customer Experience Team are in regular contact. Board meetings have a regular agenda item for the MRC.
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: 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	<u>Our Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report</u> - Regular meetings with the Customer Experience Team - Regular Board agenda item for the MRC	Our Boards (SYHA & Alliance Housing) receive an annual complaints performance & service improvement report. The Customer Experience Lead meets with the MRC each month, sharing data and insight. The MRC shares an update at each Board meeting. Any Housing Ombudsman updates are shared with the MRC.
9.8	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:	Yes	Complaint Objective Setting guidelines	We have produced complaint objective setting guidelines for all relevant employees that will be used to set annual objectives.

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	a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.			Our new strategy, values and behaviours work also reflects our culture for complaints handling. Areas of further development are: - To develop a new Complaints Training course for all staff - To develop an internal communications plan for complaints information for staff.
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