## Appendix A: Self-assessment form

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.

We recognise that there may be a small number of circumstances where landlords are unable to meet the requirements, for example, if they do not have a website. In these circumstances, we expect landlords to deliver the intentions of the Code in an alternative way, for example by publishing information in a public area so that it is easily accessible.

## Section 1: Definition of a complaint

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 1.2 | A complaint must be defined as:<br><br>*'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'* | Yes | This definition is within our Complaints and Compliments Policy.<br><br>It is also stated on our communication pages (website & online account) when tenants submit complaint | We have adopted this definition in our Complaints Policy.<br><br>This definition is provided to all new starters on induction for staff awareness. |
| 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 | This is detailed within our Complaints and Compliments Policy.<br><br>Complaints submitted via a third party or representative are accepted and handled in line with our policy, subject to appropriate consent/authority checks. | All call handling staff have completed refresher training in 2025/26 to ensure we are identifying complaints from all interaction with customers, regardless of the language used.<br><br>All new staff complete complaints training as part of the induction process to ensure they understand the complaints process. |
| 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 | Yes | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy | All service requests are logged on our CRM system; any outstanding requests |

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| | 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. | | | are monitored by individual service areas.<br><br>We have adapted our CRM system to allow us to easily report on resolved and unresolved service requests.<br><br>All complaints are reviewed by the Complaints Officer to establish if the correct process has been followed and, where a service request has been logged as a complaint, the Complaints Officer contacts the tenant to advise them accordingly on this and this is logged and amended on the system.<br><br>In 2025/26 we logged 229 expressions of dissatisfaction as potential complaints. Of the 229 logged, 30 did not proceed to Stage 1 because they were identified as service requests (and redirected). or were withdrawn following the acknowledgement call. |
| 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 | Yes | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy. | We always continue to provide a service despite a complaint being submitted.<br><br>In the case of emergency issues, these take priority over the complaint process |

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| | remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains. | | The Complaints Officer oversee the complaint process, including monitoring the service request in parallel to the complaint. | and are managed by the Complaints Resolution Officer, with the relevant service areas, so as not to delay emergency response times. |
| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy.<br><br>Customer Satisfaction Surveys are delivered via Customer Sure system | We review all customer feedback on our survey tool and contact customers who provide information about any service failures.<br><br>We do this by opening cases on CRM for the relevant service area to contact the customer to discuss their feedback further and, if appropriate, advise them of the complaint process. |

## Section 2: Exclusions

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy.<br><br>We have a specific acknowledgement letter template to handle excluded complaints.<br><br>2025/26: out of 229 complaints received, only 3 were excluded in line with the code and explanations provided. | The customer is made aware at the acknowledgement stage of their complaint of whether this has been accepted or excluded in line with the code and our policy.<br><br>Where multiple issues are raised, we stipulate clearly within the acknowledgement letter what issues have been accepted and what we have excluded, with our reasons for this. Our excluded template includes Ombudsman information. |
| 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:<br>• The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. | Yes | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy.<br><br>100% of all excluded complaints 25/26 received confirmation in writing. None of these went on to be escalated to the HOS. | It is clear in our policy which is accessible to all customers.<br><br>Clear explanations are provided in writing in line with the code, with advice on how to contact the ombudsman. |

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| | • 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.<br>• Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints 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 time limit where there are good reasons to do so. | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy.<br><br>During 2025/26, only 1 complaint was received outside of the 12 months' timescale and this was processed as a service request as there had been no contact for the same length of time. | Each case is considered on its own merits in line with the code and our policy. |
| 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 | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy.<br><br>Our acknowledgement letter template guides our responses to ensure the | We have a process in place to ensure that residents are provided with a clear explanation and signposted to the Housing Ombudsman Service within our template letters for excluded complaints. |

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| | 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. | | relevant explanations are given.<br><br>100% of all excluded complaints 2025/26 received confirmation in writing. | |
| 2.5 | Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint. | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy. | We treat each complaint on its own merit and where necessary apply reasonable adjustments. |

## Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy.<br><br>Complaints can be made via –<br>Website<br>online portal<br>Phone<br>Email<br>In writing<br><br>Our Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement is publicly available.<br><br>Our Complaints and Compliments policy stipulates reasonable adjustments should be considered. | Our complaint policy is published on our website, and we have a dedicated complaints page that sets out the policy in customer friendly language. This includes how complaints can be raised and a complaint form (see website). We accept complaints from multiple channels and complaints do not have to be submitted in writing – they can be verbal and a member of staff will capture the nature of the complaint.<br><br>We have a dedicated Housing Liaison team who are competent in advising customers over the phone and helping provide an easy route to their complaint.<br><br>We have implemented an online portal which allows customers to submit a complaint with a straightforward process from their phones or other devices. |
| 3.2 | Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy. | As part of new staff inductions, the Complaints Officer provides training on |

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| | 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. | | Our Induction Training includes awareness of complaints being raised in multiple ways.<br><br>Regular refresher training is conducted for frontline teams most likely to be informed that a resident would like to complain. | Complaint Handling relevant to the individual's job role.<br><br>Complaints training has been provided to all frontline staff, and we will continue to regularly update the session.<br><br>Where it is identified within a complaint that a staff member has shown a lack of awareness on any aspect of complaint handling, this is raised with the individual and teams as part of the feedback process to and coaching to improve our complaint handling. |
| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy.<br><br>Our regular reports to Board convey our positive complaints culture and the efforts that are made to response constructively to complaints and learn lessons from these. | Our website has been updated to implement this message to our residents on our complaint's website.<br><br>Training has been given to relevant staff to ensure a customer is given the chance to make a formal complaint if they wish. Complaints for 2025/26 raised remain on par with 2024/25 showing we continued to raise complaints. |
| 3.4 | Landlords must make their complaint policy available in | YES | Policy available on website | Our complaint policy is published on our website, and we have a dedicated |

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| | 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. | | | complaints page that sets out the policy in customer friendly language. This includes how complaints can be raised and a complaint form (see website).<br><br>Our response letters include appropriate guidance about escalation, and we also have an advice leaflet available at each stage of our complaint process. |
| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy. | Our complaint policy is available on our website, alongside a dedicated page |
| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy. | All communication (website, policy, leaflets) provides information regarding representatives.<br><br>Residents are given the option to have a representative present within the process. |
| 3.7 | Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy and on our website and template letters. | Information is provided with advice leaflets and our complaint formal letters. |

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| | engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint. | | | |

## Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 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 | Our 'Service Manager – Customer Insight' is the designated Complaints Officer | The Service Manager - Customer Insight is responsible for logging all complaints, sending acknowledgements, and overseeing the complaint process.<br><br>They also provide information and liaise with the ombudsman, manage the ombudsman portal and complaints communication. The role is supported by the Head of Corporate Services who ensures complaints are reported to the governing body (Board). The team has also been expanded in 2025/26 to include a "Complaints Resolution Officer" role. |
| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy.<br><br>The Service Manager Customer Insight attends quarterly meetings with the Customer Experience Working Group (includes Director, Board Member and Involved Resident | The Service Manager Customer Insight has access to all levels of staff. As part of their role they have the appropriate complaints handling skills to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly. |

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| | | | members) and has regular Complaints Review sessions with the Chief Executive Officer. | |
| 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 | The Complaints Officer attends relevant conferences; ombudsman training and other events specifically aimed at complaints handling.<br><br>The importance of complaints is stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy.<br><br>We introduced additional resourcing in 2025/26 to the complaints team. | The Service Manager Customer Insight, Complaints Resolution Officer and complaint handlers have the appropriate complaints handling skills and attend regular refresher training on complaint handling.<br><br>The Service Manager Customer Insight is responsible for providing monthly and quarterly reports on lessons learnt complaint themes and areas of improvement.<br><br>All complaint handlers have received up to date complaint handling training in line with the code. |

## Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 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 | There is one single Complaints and Compliments Policy and a separate Redress and Compensation policy, both in line with the Code. | Both policies are published on our website. We do not treat residents differently if they have complained. |
| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy. | Connect has two stages in the complaint process. Stage 1 and 2 in line with the Ombudsman Code. |
| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy. | As above |

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| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy | All complaints have been handled directly by Connect's staff in 2025/26.<br><br>Only actions arising from complaints have been signposted to contractors, such as apology letters and compensation for damage.<br><br>Complainants are signposted to Connect by our contractors if initial contact is made to them. |
| 5.5 | Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code. | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy | No third parties handled any complaints during 2025/26, but our policy sets out our responsibility for ensuring all complaints are handled in line with the Code. |
| 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 | Template letters are set out with the necessary information to be included. | Training has been provided to all relevant staff to ensure compliance with the Code. All complaint document templates have also been updated to ensure complaint handlers are including the relevant information.<br><br>We have enhanced our process to ensure all complainants are contacted via phone or preferred method to confirm complaint definition within the acknowledgement period by the Complaints Resolution Officer. |

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| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy and our acknowledgement letter template | Connect has standard acknowledgement letter templates which prompt the user to provide this information. |
| 5.8 | At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:<br>a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;<br>b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position;<br>c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and<br>d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully. | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy | All complaint handlers have received Complaint handling training to ensure full compliance with the code. They are fully supported, and advice is given by the Complaints Officer and Complaints Resolution Officer throughout the complaint process. |
| 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 | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy | Complaint handlers will aim to establish the frequency of updates and best method of communications with the resident, supported by the Complaints Officer. |

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| | keeping them informed about their complaint. | | | Our CRM system allows for actions to be logged and monitored which is reviewed regularly by the complaint handlers and complaints officer to ensure all actions are completed and prompts regular communication with the customer.<br><br>Monthly reports are produced which include open complaint actions and are reviewed by supervisory and management group. |
| 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 | Within the Complaints and Compliments policy and recorded on CRM system | Records of disabilities and any other reasonable adjustments are recorded against the tenancy on our CRM system.<br><br>Within our standard complaint questions, customers are asked if there are any disabilities or vulnerabilities to be considered. Systems are updated accordingly and complaint handlers are notified of this to allow for any reasonable adjustments at the time the complaint is assigned. |
| 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 | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy and is evidenced through our CRM case management system. | Connect is compliant with section 2 of the Code as evidenced in our policy. During 2025/26 100% of escalated requests have been accepted. |

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| | must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code. | | | |
| 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 | CRM case management<br>MRIDM (document management system) | Connect has a complaint case management system that records all outcomes within the complaints process. All documents and evidence are stored on our document management system (MRIDM) including original complaint and response letters. |
| 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 | Complaints and Compliments Policy<br>&<br>Redress and Compensation policy | This is clearly stated within our polices.<br><br>All remedies are recorded via actions raised and monitored with financial compensation being recorded separately. |
| 5.14 | Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy | Examples of unacceptable behaviour and reasonable steps - and when they would apply - are detailed in our Complaints and Compliments Policy. |

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| | their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review. | | | Any restrictions put in place due to unacceptable behaviour will be recorded in our CRM system.<br><br>During 2025/26 there have been no restrictions. |
| 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 | Complaints and Compliments Policy | This is detailed in our Complaints and Compliments Policy.<br><br>2025/26 no restrictions have been required. |

## Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy | Complaints are triaged at the stage of receipt and assessed whether a concise and rapid stage 1 response can be offered. This includes agreeing where a service request is most appropriate to resolve an issue.<br><br>Stage 1 complaints are managed primarily by the Complaints Resolution Officer or Service Managers, who possess the relevant skills and experience to aim to resolve the complaint at stage 1.<br><br>This would be our approach when dealing with any enquiry, including complaints. |
| 6.2 | Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure **within five working days of the complaint being received**. | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>In 2025/26, 97% of complaints were acknowledged on time. The minority of overdue acknowledgements were due to an error in our CRM system | Within our Complaints Policy, we commit to an acknowledgement within 5 working days. We ensure that all contact is recorded on our internal systems for quality assurance and audit purposes. When acknowledging complaints, we will always summarise our understanding of the concerns raised. |

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| | | | which was identified in June 2025 and amended. The late acknowledgements were all sent on 'day 6' as the system had this set as 'day 5'. | The error in the system was identified and rectified in June 2025 so only impacted the first quarter of the year.<br><br>This error was reported to Board in September 2025. |
| 6.3 | Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints **within 10 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged. | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>During 2025/26, 98% of stage 1 complaints were responded to within the 10-day response times target (excluding those where an extension was mutually agreed with the tenant). This amounts to four complaints that were not responded to on time. | This is clearly stated within our Complaints Policy and tracked and reported on.<br><br>Training has been provided in line with the new Code coming into force.<br>The Complaints Officer sends reminders two days before the target date and again on target date when necessary.<br><br>We introduced a Complaints Resolution Officer from September 2025 to ensure we could deliver the required service in light of sustained demand. |
| 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 | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>During 2025/26, only 9 complaints were extended in line with the code. | This is clearly stated within our Complaints Policy and there has been a significant improvement in this area following the complaint training. |

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| | extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident. | | | Following the introduction of the CRO we have seen a significant reduction in complaints being extended. |
| 6.5 | When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman. | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>Extension Letter Template | Connect provides information as standard on the extension template letter and it is included within all advice leaflets.<br><br>2025/26 100% received extension letters with advice on the ombudsman. |
| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy.<br><br>Actions are recorded and tracked on our CRM system. | Complaint handling training has been provided to all complaint handlers to ensure responses are sent at the point of the complaint being concluded and not when all the actions are completed. |
| 6.7 | Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>Template letters direct this. | Complaint handling training has been provided to all complaint handlers and templates amended to ensure all relevant information is provided within the response letter in line with the code. |

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| | law and good practice where appropriate. | | | |
| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy | This is our approach when dealing with any enquiry, including complaints. |
| 6.9 | Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language:<br>a. the complaint stage;<br>b. the complaint definition;<br>c. the decision on the complaint;<br>d. the reasons for any decisions made; | YES | Complaints and Compliments policy<br><br>Template Letters | All complaint responders have been provided training in line with the code on complaint handling and responses.<br><br>Template letters have been reviewed by CVG and updated to include more helpful guidance on what to write in a response letter. |

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| | e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;<br>f. details of any outstanding actions; and<br>g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response. | | | |

Stage 2

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>Template Letters | This is clearly stated within our Complaints Policy and tracked and on our CRM system. |
| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>2025/26: 45 stage 2s logged, with 98% acknowledged on time. There was one late | Within our Complaints Policy, we commit to an acknowledgement within 5 working days. We ensure that all contact is recorded on our internal systems for quality assurance and audit purposes. When acknowledging complaints, we will |

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| | | | acknowledgment due to the same system error noted in 6.2. | always summarise our understanding of the concerns raised.<br><br>1 complaint failed to be acknowledged on time but since the error was identified 100% have been acknowledged on time. |
| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy | This is our approach when dealing with any Stage 2 complaints, with all complaint handlers provided the appropriate training. |
| 6.13 | The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1. | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy | All stage 2 complaints are dealt with at Head of Service /Director level. Where a Head of Service handles a Stage 1 complaint, the Stage 2 will always escalate to Director-level. |
| 6.14 | Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 **within 20 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged. | YES | Complaints and Compliments Policy | This is tracked and reported on. 100% of Stage 2 complaints were responded to within timescale in the last year. |
| 6.15 | Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy | As some Stage 2 are inevitably very complex, this provision is used as appropriate and in line with the Code and our policy. |

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| | 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. | | Only 4 out of 45 stage 2 complaints were extended with agreement by the complainants due to being complex issues that required further investigation and responses from contractors. | |
| 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 | Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>Extension letter template<br><br>Advice Leaflet | Information is provided within the standard response template letter and in the accompanying advice leaflet. |
| 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 | Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>Response letter templates | This is clearly stated within our Complaints Policy.<br><br>Actions are tracked on our CRM system. |
| 6.18 | Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, | YES | Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>Response letter templates | All Complaint Handlers have been informed of this process and given the relevant training. |

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| | referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate. | | | Our template letters have clear guidance to ensure all points are addressed. |
| 6.19 | Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language:<br>a. the complaint stage;<br>b. the complaint definition;<br>c. the decision on the complaint;<br>d. the reasons for any decisions made;<br>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;<br>f. details of any outstanding actions; and<br>g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied. | YES | Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>Response letter templates<br><br>Advice Leaflet | All Stage 2 Complaint Handlers have been informed of this process. Our response letter templates cover all these areas.<br><br>An advice leaflet confirming the right to escalate to the ombudsman is also available to customers with the Stage 2 response. |
| 6.20 | Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy | This is clearly stated within our Complaints Policy and tracked and on our CRM system. |

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| | needed to issue such a response. | | Template Letters | |

## Section 7: Putting things right

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 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:<br>• Apologising;<br>• Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;<br>• Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;<br>• Taking action if there has been delay;<br>• Reconsidering or changing a decision;<br>• Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;<br>• Providing a financial remedy; | YES | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy and the Redress and Compensation Policy | Out of 196 completed Stage 1 complaints, 137 were upheld. We have given financial compensation in **47** of these cases. The total paid in 2025/26 for Stage 1 complaints is **£12,908.**<br><br>Out of 40 completed Stage 2 complaints, 21 of were upheld, of which **14** were awarded financial compensation. The amount of compensation for Stage 2 complaints was **£5,183**.<br><br>Alongside this we have arranged gestures of goodwill, such as – carpet cleaning, re-decorating of rooms. |

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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 | This is clearly stated within our Complaints and Compliments Policy and the Redress and Compensation Policy | |
| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Redress and Compensation Policy | Our new case management system allows us to monitor any remedy through to completion. |
| 7.4 | Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies. | YES | This is clearly stated within our Redress and Compensation Policy | Our policies have been updated in line with the new ombudsman guidance. |

## Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 8.1 | Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:<br>a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.<br>b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept;<br>c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;<br>d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; | YES | Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>Annual Complaints Performance Report 2025/26 (May 2026 Board)<br><br>Annual Lessons Learned from Complaints Report (September 2026 Board) | Our policies have been updated in line with the guidance provided.<br><br>Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025/26 to be considered by Customer Experience Work Group, Customer Voice Group and Board during May 2026 with final sign off at September 2026 Board Meeting, alongside a deeper dive into 'lessons learned'. |

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| | e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and<br>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 on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this. | YES | Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>Annual reports to Board May 2026 and September 2026.<br><br>Summary report published on Connect website, along with Board response. | The annual complaints and service improvement report was reported to the Connect Board in May 2026 and a follow up insight report to be reported to Board in September. The summary report and the Board's response are published on the Connect website. |
| 8.3 | Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures. | YES | Complaints and Compliments Policy | No restructure has occurred in last reporting period, but policies have been updated. |
| 8.4 | Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation. | YES | Complaints and Compliments Policy | Not applicable at this point in time, but policies have been updated. |

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| 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 | Complaints and Compliments Policy | Not applicable, but policies have been updated. |

## Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
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| 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 | This is clearly stated within our Redress and Compensation Policy<br><br>Evidenced through Quarterly Reporting and two Annual Board reports. | Lessons learned are shared on an ongoing basis. We identify lessons learnt and these are monitored on our complaints management system.<br><br>Our Customer Experience Working Group reviews the Quarterly Complaints Report and undertakes root cause analysis exercises and reviews quarterly complaints reporting to identify potential service improvements. |
| 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 | Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>Monthly & Quarterly Internal Reporting<br><br>Annual reporting to board | Our values and corporate strategy support this. Our internal communications also regularly promote this message.<br><br>All staff are required to have undergone a Customer Service training course as part of our mandatory training programme, where positive messages around complaints and service improvement have been reinforced.<br><br>Complaints reporting is now going to a Customer Experience Working Group to identify learning and introduce positive change to service delivery prior to reports to the Board. |

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| 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 | Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>Annual Complaints Reports<br><br>CEWG minutes<br><br>Regular attendance of Complaints Team at Customer Voice Group | Learning and improvements from complaints are reported quarterly to the Customer Experience Working Group (which includes residents) and our Board along with any HOS findings.<br><br>The Annual Complaint Report goes to Board and is published on our website and, for 2025/26 data, has structured into two Board reports (May 2026 and further insight report September 2026).<br><br>Self-Assessment is approved by Board prior to publication.<br><br>Board also consider a quarterly customer insight report which includes complaints insight.<br><br>We have identified an area for improvement to provide quarterly updates on our 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 | YES | Complaints and Compliments Policy | The designated Complaints Officer reports to the Head of Corporate Services who has overall responsibility for the implementation of the complaints policy, including assessing any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision. |

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| | procedures that require revision. | | | |
| 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 | Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>Board minutes | A member of our Board was appointed MRC through 2024/25 and 2025/26. Their responsibilities are set out in the complaints policy, and their role is detailed in our Standing Orders. A new MRC has been appointed at the AGM in September 2026. |
| 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 | Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>Customer Experience Working Group (CEWG) Terms of Reference (ToR) | The MRC is a member of our CEWG which meets quarterly throughout the year to discuss trends and themes from complaints arising. |
| 9.7 | As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:<br>a. regular updates on the volume, categories and | YES | Complaints and Compliments Policy<br><br>Quarterly Board reports. | A quarterly Customer Insight Report is reported to Board and the MRC which includes details of complaints volumes and response rates, themes and trends from |

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| | outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;<br>b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;<br>c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and<br>d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report. | | Annual Complaints Performance and Service improvement Reports | complaint handling and service improvements made.<br><br>The Board also receives a regular update from the Leadership Team which includes any findings from the Ombudsman. |
| 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:<br>a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; | YES | Complaints and Compliments Policy | All colleagues must go through our Code of Conduct training where it is made clear that they should have a collaborative approach to resolving complaints, take collective responsibility and not to blame others, and act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints.<br><br>Managing Agents have also received a version of this training, and a modified version of our internal complaints training. |

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| | b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and<br>c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body. | | | |