

Complaints self-assessment

Mears Living subscribes to the Housing Ombudsman’s complaint handling code.

This means we are committed to meeting certain criteria in the way we handle complaints from our customers.

The code requires us to carry out a self-assessment to check how we are performing and where we could improve. In completing ours, we have looked at our performance during 2020 (January to December).

Complaints self-assessment for Mears Living – January – December 2020:

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No
	Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint? <i>An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.</i>	X	
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	X	
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents? Evidence relied upon <i>The exclusions are in line with industry best practice. The complaints policy – including the exclusions section – has been reviewed and ratified by the Mears Group PLC Your Voice customer scrutiny panel.</i>		
2	Accessibility		
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	X	
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	X	
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	X	
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	X	
3	Complaints team and process		
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	X	
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	X	
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	X	

	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?	N/A	
	Is any third stage optional for residents?	N/A	
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	X	
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	X	
	At what stage are most complaints resolved? <i>We</i>		
4	Communication		
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	X	
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	X	
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	X	
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	X	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one? <i>We are unable to provide data to demonstrate at which stage complaints are closed.</i>		
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two? <i>We are unable to provide data to demonstrate at which stage complaints are closed.</i>		
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one Stage one (with extension) • Stage two Stage two (with extension) <i>We are unable to provide data to demonstrate at which stage complaints were closed.</i> <i>Overall, 36% of complaints were closed within Code timescales.</i>		
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason? <i>On some, not all occasions. Our data is not currently sophisticated enough to evidence that timescales have been extended for good reason.</i> <i>We</i>	X	X

	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed? <i>On some, not all occasions.</i>	X	X
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction? <i>We are unable to provide data for this.</i>		
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	X	
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	X	
6	Fairness in complaint handling		
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	X	
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	X	
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate? <i>0</i> What was the reason for the refusal? <i>N/A</i>		
	Did we explain our decision to the resident? <i>N/A</i>		
7	Outcomes and remedies		
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	X	
8	Continuous learning and improvement		
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints? <i>Changes to the complaints handling process itself</i>		
	How do we share these lessons with: a) residents? <i>In individual complaint responses</i> b) the board/governing body? <i>To the Board through a quarterly report</i> c) In the Annual Report? <i>To be included in the annual report for 2020.</i>		

	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	X	
	<p>What changes have we made?</p> <p><i>We have moved from a three-stage to a two- stage process.</i></p> <p><i>We have adopted the Housing Ombudsman’s definition of a complaint. It has fed into a wider review of our complaints handling performance.</i></p>		