

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

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	<p>A complaint must be defined as:</p> <p><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></p>	Yes	<p>Our online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure.</p>	<p>This is defined within our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure. Section titled <u>What is a complaint?</u> specifies:</p> <p><i>‘A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Council, its staff, or those acting on behalf of the Council, affecting an individual citizen or group of citizens.’</i></p>
1.3	<p>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.</p>	Yes	<p>Our online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure.</p>	<p>Our residents do not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treat as such. This is defined within our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure.</p> <p>Section titled <u>Who can make a complaint</u> specifies:</p> <p><i>‘The Council will accept complaints from anyone who has used or been affected by a service provided by or on behalf of the Council. The</i></p>

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				<i>Council will also accept complaints from</i>
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	Our online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure .	<p>This is defined within our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure. section titled '<i>What is a complaint?</i>' it states:</p> <p><i>'Complaints and service requests can be closely related. The initial reporting of a fault will normally be treated as a service request and the Council will seek to resolve the issue outside of this procedure in the first instance. When assessing whether to treat a contact as a complaint or a service request each case will be considered on its individual merits and consideration may be given to the following factors'</i></p> <p>As a landlord we do recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. We follow the Housing Ombudsman definition on this matter.</p>
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	Yes	Our online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure .	This is defined within our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure. Section titled <u>What is a complaint?</u>

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	<p>request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.</p>			<p>specifies:</p> <p><i>When assessing whether to treat a contact as a complaint or a service request each case will be considered on its individual merits and consideration may be given to the following factors. This list is not exhaustive:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Whether the customer has been made aware of the complaints procedure and has identified their contact as being a complaint.</i> • <i>What the expression of dissatisfaction is about.</i> • <i>The tone of the correspondence.</i> • <i>What the customer would like to happen next.</i> • <i>Whether the matter has already been treated as a service request.</i>
1.6	<p>An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Questions 22 of the 2023 STAR Survey was</p>	<p>We will ensure that we provide information on how to make a complaint when we carry and</p>

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	<p>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.</p>		<p><i>'Oxford City Council changed their complaints procedure. You can make a complaint by phoning The Council, writing to customer services or filling in the online customer feedback form. Were you aware of how to make a complaint before today?'</i></p>	<p>included this in the autumn 2023 STAR survey.</p> <p>We also gather real-time transactional satisfaction performance on completion of repairs & gas servicing, with direct interventions by team leaders/planners where satisfaction is less than required.</p>
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Section 2: Exclusions

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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		As a landlord we do accept, log, investigate and respond to all complaints.
2.2	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>Our online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure.</p>	<p>This is set out in our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure.</p> <p>Section titled <u>What will not be treated as a complaint under this procedure</u></p>

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		As a landlord we do accept, log, investigate and respond to all complaints.
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		To date we have had no situation whereby we have not accepted a complaint.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Our online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure	This is defined within our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure. Section titled <u>What will not be treated as a complaint under this procedure?</u>

Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	Our online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure .	This is defined within our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure. Section 'Reasonable Adjustments' specifies: <i>'Anyone is welcome to make a comment. Compliment or complaint and the Council is committed to treating everyone fairly. If a complainant requires any particular assistance the Council will tailor made this service to the complainants needs. This may include, for example, the provision of information in alternative formats (e.g. large print), the use of a language service, or communication through a representative'.</i>
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their	Yes	Our online Comments,	This is defined within our

	<p>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.</p>		<p>Compliments and Complaints procedure.</p>	<p>Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure. Section titled. <u>How to make a comment, compliment or complaint?</u></p> <p>provides detail on how to raise a complaint via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone • Online form • In person • In writing (to our Town Hall) • By email • Via a Councillor or MP <p><u>The Council's Tenant Portal is due to go live in autumn 2023, with the functionality for tenants to raise a complaint, comment or compliment.</u></p>
<p>3.3</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Our online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure.</p> <p>Our Landlord Complaints webpage.</p>	<p>By simply typing the word 'complaint' with in the search bar of www.oxford.gov.uk returns the necessary webpage on complaints that residents need.</p>

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				We also have a Landlord Complaints webpage.
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 online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure .	This is defined within our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure. The procedure details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of stages involved. • What occurs at each stage. • The timeframes of each stage.
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 online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure .	This is defined within our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure. Section <u><i>Ombudsman</i></u>
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		Residents have the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint or to accompany them at any meeting.
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 online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure .	Contact information for the Housing Ombudsman is included in both Stage 1 and Stage 2 written responses to residents.

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				This is defined within our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure. Section <u>Ombudsman</u>
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Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

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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		<p>Oxford City Council employed a Customer Care & Complaints Officer in October 2022.</p> <p>The officer is assigned to take responsibility of landlord related complaints.</p> <p>Oxford City Council employed a Customer Care & Complaints Manager in February 2023.</p>
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		<p>Our Customer Care & Complaints Officer make contact with the complainant once it has been logged, to better understand the complaint and to seek a fair and balance resolution from the outcome. The officer will also make reference to the Housing Ombudsman at this stage and establish if any</p>

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				reasonable adjustments need to be made.
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		<p>The Customer Care & Complaints Manager and Customer Care and Complaints Officer does have appropriate skills, experience and training.</p> <p>Our Customer Care & Complaints Officer makes contact with the complainant once it has been logged, to better understand the complaint and to seek a fair and balance resolution from the outcome. The officer will also make reference to the Housing Ombudsman at this stage and establish if any reasonable adjustments need to be made.</p>

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	Yes	Our online Comments .	Oxford City Council has a

	place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.		Compliments and Complaints procedure. Our Landlord Complaints webpage.	single Complaints Procedure that is compliant with the Code.
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 online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure.	Every effort is made to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity, having due regard to the complexity of the case and any urgent issues are dealt with in a timely manner, where necessary, before the complaint response is sent out. We only have a two stages process. This is defined within our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure. Section titled <u>How your complaints will be dealt with</u>
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 online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure.	We only have a two-stage process. This is defined within our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure.

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				Section titled <u>How your complaints will be dealt with</u>
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	ODS website	ODS (Oxford Direct Services) are a subsidiary company of Oxford City Council. They also only have a two-stage process.
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	ODS website	ODS (Oxford Direct Services) are a subsidiary company of Oxford City Council. They also only have a two-stage process and are compliant with the Code. ODS publish monthly reports of their complaints handling to the landlord.
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	Yes		We first make contact by the complaint's preferred methods of contact and send an acknowledgement letter containing the clarification of the complainant's Stage 2 complaint.

	clarification.			
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		Written acknowledgements contain a summary of the issues being complained about and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The initial contact between the Complaint Officer and the tenant also confirms the position.
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully. 	Yes		Having recruited a Customer Care & Complaints Officer, this ensures that all complainants are treated in an unbiased fashion when contact is made. The Investigation Officer make contact with the compliant to clarify the complaint. They investigate all information provided by the resident and take and audit of internal services to verify the situation. We take an impartial view and treat every compliant on it's own merits. The Customer Care &

				Complaints Officer also carries out a quality check on the majority of letter written by the Investigation Officer to ensure these principles are followed.
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		<p>The Customer Care & Complaints Officer makes contact with the complainant to discuss an extension. Where this is agreed, this is confirmed in writing.</p> <p>We also contact the customer and discuss frequency and preferred communication methods.</p>
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	Our online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure .	<p>This is defined within our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure. Section 'Reasonable Adjustments' specifies:</p> <p><i>'Anyone is welcome to make a comment. Compliment or complaint and the Council is committed to treating everyone fairly. If a complainant requires any</i></p>

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				<i>particular assistance the Council will tailor made this service to the complainants needs. This may include, for example, the provision of information in alternative formats (e.g. large print), the use of a language service, or communication through a representative’.</i>
70	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	Our online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure . Where a complaint is not upheld, we clearly advise the customer how that outcome has been reached and offer them an opportunity to appeal or discuss further as part of our complaint response letter. In our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure, we have set out the circumstances where we may reasonably refuse to escalate a complaint.
	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	Yes	A complaints system/log is in place to manage landlord complaints. The log keeps clear audit trail of correspondents between the complainant and landlord. The complaints system/log

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	such as reports or surveys.			does not include any additional stages outside of the required two stage process.
71	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	<p>Our online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure.</p> <p>We recognise where there are failings and manage the expectation of the complainants and what we are then able to deliver. Remedies include apologies, compensation, ex-gratia payments or a gesture e.g., charitable contribution</p> <p>This is defined within our online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure. Section titled <u>Remedy</u> and specified:</p> <p>If it is identified during the complaints process that a fault by the Council has directly caused personal injustice the Council will seek to offer a remedy that is proportionate and reasonable in view of the</p>

				<p>circumstances of the situation. This may include, for example, offering an apology, reviewing processes and procedures, or offering to compensate any financial loss resulting directly from the Council's actions.</p> <p>We take into account the quantifiable losses to the complaint, which includes the time and trouble it has taken for them to complain when awarding compensation.</p> <p>We will also consider any statutory payments such as Home Loss, Right to Repair etc.</p>
5.14	<p>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.</p>		<p>Our online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure.</p>	<p>This is defined within our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure. Section titled <u>Reasonable and Unreasonable Behaviour</u></p> <p>And section titled <u>Manage</u></p>

				<p><u>unreasonable behaviour and vexatious complaints</u></p> <p>We also have Vexatious Guidance.</p>
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		If it is necessary to restrict contact with a resident, we will have due regard to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 our Equality Duty, the protected characteristics of the resident and any reasonable adjustments that may be required.

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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	Yes		Every effort is made to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity, having due regard to the complexity of the case and any urgent issues are dealt with in a timely manner, where necessary, before the complaint response is sent out

	resident.			
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		Written acknowledgements is provided within five working days and contain a summary of the issues being complained about and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The initial contact between the Complaint Officer and the tenant also confirms the position.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Our online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure .	This is defined within our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure. Section titled <u>How your complaints will be dealt with</u>
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		The Customer Care & Complaints Officer makes contact with the complainant to discuss an extension. Where this is agreed, this is confirmed in writing.
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		When an extension occurs, the Customer Care & Complaints Officer also provides the complainant the Housing Ombudsman

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				<p>details. Our letter response also includes the Housing Ombudsman details.</p>
6.6	<p>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.</p>	Yes		<p>Written complaint responses are sent to the resident when the answer to complaint is known. Where there are any outstanding actions, these are listed within the written response with target dates.</p> <p>The Customer Care & Complaints Officer logs any outstanding actions and tracks these to completion by working with the relevant service area.</p>
6.7	<p>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.</p>	Yes		<p>As a landlord our complaints responses do address all points raised and provide clear reasons for the decisions.</p>
6.8	<p>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</p>	Yes		<p>Where there is a live complaint, customers can also raise multiple requests during the process of a complaint if they are related, prior to the investigation starting. Where a complainant</p>

	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.			requested to add unrelated issue, it is first reviewed on whether it is a service request, or alternatively advised to register a new Stage 1 complaint.
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response. 	Yes		We have adopted the Housing Ombudsman's template response letters, incorporating the requirements to ensure compliance.

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		If the complainant is not satisfied by the response, then they are able to escalate the complaint to the second and final stage.

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		Written acknowledgements if provided within five working days and contains a summary of the issues being escalated and the outcomes the resident is seeking. Further contact between the Complaint Officer and the tenant also confirms the position.
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		Our Stage 1 letter response does not require the complainant to explain their reasons for requesting a Stage 2. It states <i>'If you would like to take your complaint to Stage 2, please advise us. We will then make every effort to better understand the reasons for your ongoing dissatisfaction, either in email, letter or phone call'.</i>
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Our online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure .	This is defined within our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure. Section titled <u>How your complaints will be dealt with</u> specifies:

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				<p><i>Our stage 2 complaints are responded to by a Head of Service.</i></p>
6.14	<p>Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.</p>	Yes		<p>Our stage 2 complaints are responded to within the 20 working days, although we aim to provide the response in as short a timeframe as possible, following a thorough investigation by the Head of Service.</p> <p>Where there are exceptional circumstances and it is not possible to provide a response within 20 working days, we will inform the resident and provide a clear timeframe and explanation as to why.</p>
6.15	<p>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.</p>	Yes		<p>The Customer Care & Complaints Officer makes contact with the complainant to discuss an extension. Where this is agreed, this is confirmed in writing.</p>
6.16	<p>When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these</p>	Yes		<p>When an extension occurs, the Customer Care &</p>

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	timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.			Complaints Officer also provides the complainant the Housing Ombudsman details.
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		Written complaint responses are sent to the resident when the answer to complaint is known. Where there are any outstanding actions, these are listed within the written response with target dates. The Customer Care & Complaints Officer logs any outstanding actions and tracks these to completion by working with the relevant service area.
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		As a landlord our complaints responses do address all points raised and provide clear reasons for the decisions.
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made;	Yes		We have adopted the Housing Ombudsman's template response letters, incorporating the requirements to ensure compliance. We provide details of how the resident can escalate the matter to

	<p>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</p> <p>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</p> <p>g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.</p>			the Housing Ombudsman.
6.20	<p>Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.</p>	Yes	<p>Our online Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure.</p>	<p>This is defined within our Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure. Section titled <u>How your complaints will be dealt with</u> specifies:</p> <p><i>Our stage 2 complaints are responded to by a Head of Service.</i></p>

Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologising; • Acknowledging where things 	Yes		<p>Oxford City Council's complaints procedure is in place to effectively resolve disputes, by identifying what has gone wrong and the intended actions to put things right.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; • Changing policies, procedures or practices. 			<p>This is evident from the investigating officer managing the next steps and outcomes until the complaint is fully resolved. The Service area affected where relevant will make the appropriate service improvements.</p>
7.2	<p>Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.</p>	Yes		<p>We recognise where there are failings and manage the expectation of the complainants and what we are then able to deliver. Remedies include apologies, compensation, ex-gratia payments or a gesture e.g., charitable contribution</p>
7.3	<p>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.</p>	Yes		<p>From the conclusion of the investigation remedies are identified where appropriate in agreement with the complainant and any remedies proposed are monitored through to completion.</p>
7.4	<p>Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman</p>	Yes		<p>As good practice we refer to the Housing Ombudsman</p>

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	when deciding on appropriate remedies.			guidance when deciding on appropriate remedies.
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Section 8: Putting things right

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. 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; 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. 	No		

<p>8.2</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>No</p>		<p>8.1 & 8.2 Complaint handling performance is reported to the Housing and Homelessness Panel (of the Scrutiny Committee) which in turn is reviewed by the Scrutiny Panel and the Council. The Annual Complaints Report 2023-24 will incorporate all of the required elements and will be published both on the Committee pages of the Council's website and on the Housing Complaints pages. This self-assessment will be updated to reflect this measure on publication of the Annual Complaints Report and the self-assessment.</p>
<p>8.3</p>	<p>Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.</p>	<p>Yes</p>		<p>As a landlord, we will commit to carrying out a detailed annual self-assessment against to code to ensure our complaint handling remains in line with the requirements.</p>
<p>8.4</p>	<p>Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.</p>	<p>Yes</p>		<p>As a landlord, we will commit to carrying out a review and update of our</p>

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				self-assessment if requested by the Ombudsman.
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		If this situation did occur and we were unable to comply with the Code, then we would be committed to inform the Ombudsman and the affected complainants and publish this on our website with the appropriate timescales for the reconvening of the service.

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes		<p>We do look beyond the circumstances of the complainant and identify the complaint and how these impacts on residents as a whole.</p> <p>Appreciative enquiries and customer journey mapping has been carried out in areas where complaints have been raised and service failings have been identified.</p>
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		<p>As a landlord we recognise the positive impact complaints have on future service delivery, which is supported through the investigation process. Appreciative enquiries and customer journey mapping has been carried out in areas where complaints have been raised.</p>

				Learning from complaints is shared across service areas and in the example of day-to-day repairs, any learning is also shared with operatives through “toolbox talks.”
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.	No		<p>The Annual Report 2023 was published in September 2023 and provides learning from complaints. Further information on complaints is provided in the tenant newsletter.</p> <p>Complaints performance and learning is reported to the Housing & Homeless Panel (of the Scrutiny Committee).</p> <p>Planned activity will provide that learning and improvements are publicised on the Council’s website. This will provide the assurance required to meet element 9.3</p>
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for	Part		The Customer Care and Complaints Manager for the

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	<p>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.</p>			<p>landlord function was appointed in February 2024 and has accountability for complaints handling, as well as assessing any themes or trends to identify potential system issues.</p> <p>There will be a need for a corporate person to be accountable for the Council as a whole, likely to be at an Executive level. Once this person is appointed, compliance with element 9.4 will be achieved.</p>
9.5	<p>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').</p>	TBC		<p>An elected member of the Cabinet will need to be appointed to have overall responsibility for complaint handling across the whole Council, not just the landlord function. Once this person is appointed, compliance with element 9.5 will be achieved.</p>
9.6	<p>The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives</p>	TBC		<p>Complaint handling performance is reported to</p>

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	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.			the Housing and Homelessness Panel (of the Scrutiny Committee) which in turn is reviewed by the Scrutiny Panel and the Council. Once the MRC is appointed, the remit will involve the information being provided to the appropriate committee covering complaints across the whole Council.
68	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.	TBC	The Annual Complaints Report 2023-24 will incorporate all of the required elements and will be published both on the Committee pages of the Council's website and on the Housing Complaints pages. This self-assessment will be updated to reflect this measure on publication of the Annual Complaints Report and the self assessment.
	9.8	Landlords must have a standard	TBC	As a landlord we work

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	<p>objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">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; andc. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.			<p>collaboratively with other services and this is supported by having a Customer Care & Complaints Officer and a Customer Care & Complaints Manager, who ensures positive cooperation between teams and service areas.</p> <p>The corporate complaints page will need to be updated to reflect the standard objectives in 9.8</p>
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