

## 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
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <i>‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.’</i>	Yes	Statement in Customer Complaints policy section 2.1	
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	Statement in Customer Complaints policy section 2.1	
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	Yes	Statement in Customer Complaints Policy section 2.2	

	recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.			
1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	Statement in Customer Complaints policy section 2.2	
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	Customers that leave feedback via transactional survey are contacted to ask if they would like a complaint to be raised. For transactional surveys customers are given details on how to complain if dissatisfied.	

## Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	Statement in Customer Complaints policy section 2.3.1	
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"> <li>• The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	Yes	Statement in Customer Complaints policy section 2.3	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.</li> </ul>			
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	Statement in Customer Complaints policy section 2.3.	
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	Statement in Customer Complaints policy section 2.3.1	
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Complaints are always assessed individually	Equality Impact Assessment has been completed

### 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	Statement in Customer Complaints policy section 2.4.3.	This is also linked to our reasonable adjustments policy that has been updated.
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	Statement in Customer Complaints policy section 2.4.3.	Awareness of the complaints process has become part of the new starter customer induction.  Colleagues working in the Feedback Team will attend meetings as needed to run through the policy and process and answer any questions.
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	Yes	An increase of complaints has been seen since the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code has come into practice	

	sign that residents are unable to complain.			
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	This is set out in our Complaint Handling Procedure which is available on the Alliance Homes website The process is also stated on the website.	
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	Statement in Customer Complaints Policy section 3.2	Our welcome pack for new customers is being refreshed and will also include this information.
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	Statement in Customer Complaints policy section 2.4.2.	
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	Template letters are in place for all complaint correspondence, all of these template letters give information on and contact details for the Housing Ombudsman.  This is also discussed with customers who are in the complaints process when	

			acknowledging the complaint via the telephone	
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## Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes	We have a Feedback Team that will manage correspondence with the Ombudsman and will ensure all complaint information is reported to the governing body each quarter	
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	Complaints are managed by a centralised complaints team which has been in place since April 2024. This team will manage the complaint from beginning to end and will work with service managers to resolve disputes promptly and fairly	
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 centralised complaints team as above has been in place since April 2024 and are resourced adequately Complaint handlers are provided with regular training	The team attend relevant webinars on complaints handling and make use of resources on the Housing Ombudsman Centre for Learning. Centre for Learning   Housing Ombudsman

				Service (housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
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## Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	The policy is shared on our company website, alongside our self-assessment against this code	<p>All customers making a complaint are treated fairly and retain full access to all our other services.</p> <p>We do have an Unacceptable Behaviour Policy in place to enable us to better manage our interactions with customers whose behaviour maybe challenging.</p> <p>In that policy we also state at section 1.3 that all customers will be dealt with fairly, honestly, consistently, and appropriately including those whose actions are considered unacceptable.</p>
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	Yes	Our complaints procedure consists of a 2-stage complaint process with no pre complaint stage	

	complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.			
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	Our complaints procedure consists of a 2-stage complaint process	
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	All contractor complaints are managed under the Alliance Homes complaints process	
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	All contractor complaints are managed under the Alliance Homes complaints process	
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	The complaints team are trained to ask for this information when acknowledging the complaint at either stage 1 or stage 2 of the process. This also forms part of the acknowledgement letter that is sent to the customer which confirms our understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the customer is seeking.	

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.		This is covered in the complaints process that the complaints team follow and the template letters we use also clarify this in writing back to the customer.	
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;</li> <li>b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position;</li> <li>c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and</li> <li>d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.</li> </ul>	Yes	All members of the Feedback Team have been recruited for the skills they have in this area including soft skills such as demonstrating empathy and being non-judgemental.	
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	Statement in Complaints Policy section 2.4.5.	
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	Yes	We have recently rolled out a new project "Life through a lens", this project will capture any disabilities a resident has disclosed to us, and we will then shape our services around these	

	resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.		and ensure we are making reasonable adjustments where required. This information is added to our housing management system and all staff have been trained	
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	Statement in Customer Complaints policy section 2.3.1.	
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	We have a complaints work flow that has been created within our housing management system that allows for all information to be captured on the complaint case	
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	If a customer comes to us at any stage of the complaints process with an issue that we can remedy at that moment, we will do so without the need for escalation	

5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	Yes	We have an unacceptable behaviour policy that is utilised alongside the complaints policy	
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	<p>The policy takes account of the Equality Act 2010 and any action is taken is fair and proportionate.</p> <p>Any restrictions are also subject to regular review as and when things change with the customer's behaviour.</p> <p>An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken of the Policy and customers were involved in shaping the policy too.</p>	

## Section 6: Complaints Stages

### Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	Yes	The complaints team have changed their working process to consider complaints that can be easily resolved and to ensure that these are not held up due to complaints that are more complex	
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <b><u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u></b>	Yes	Statement in Customer Complaints policy section 2.4.5.	
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <b><u>within 10 working days</u></b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Statement in Customer Complaints policy section 2.4.5.	
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	Yes	Statement in Customer Complaints policy section 2.4.5.	

	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.			
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	All Housing Ombudsman details and contact information is included in the template letter used for complaint extensions	
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	Repairs are tracked through the complaints case on our housing management system to enable us to keep track of actions promised at the point of closing the complaint with the customer.	
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Template letters have prompts at both Stage One and Stage Two to ensure the letter covers this fully.	
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	Yes	All additional complaints are added to the original complaint if these are linked to the main complaint. All unrelated matters which arise during the course of an investigation are handled as a	



	investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.		separate complaint and the customer is advised of this.	
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"> <li>a. the complaint stage;</li> <li>b. the complaint definition;</li> <li>c. the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>d. the reasons for any decisions made;</li> <li>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</li> <li>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</li> <li>g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.</li> </ul>	Yes	Template letters containing prompts as a reminder to the author are used to ensure these points are captured in full.	

## 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	We make clear in the Stage 2 outcome letter that this is the final response.	
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure	Yes	A letter is sent out to customers acknowledging the escalation to Stage 2 and re-confirms the	

	within five working days of the escalation request being received.		complaint, the part of the complaint that the customer remains dissatisfied with and sets out the outcome being sought to resolve the complaint at Stage 2.	
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	All stage 2 escalations will be escalated at the request of the customer. Each customer who requests escalation has a telephone call with a member of the team to understand the reasons for escalation, what they are still unhappy and what they require in order to put the issue right.	
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	The stage 2 complaint panel is made up of a panel that will only include the stage 1 investigating manager to explain their findings from stage 1. Once the Panel have had the opportunity to hear the detail from the Stage 1 complaint and have had the opportunity to ask any questions for clarity and understanding, the person who investigated the complaint at Stage 1 will then leave the panel meeting for the Stage 2 panel to consider it's outcome.	

6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <b><u>within 20 working days</u></b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Statement in Customer Complaints policy section 2.4.5. All customers receive a full written response to their complaint at Stage 2 of the process.	
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Statement in Customer Complaints policy section 2.4.5.	
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	Housing Ombudsman details and contact information is all included in the template letters used for confirming a complaint extension.	
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	We resolve complaints at the point at which the answer is known, and the Complaints Team track outstanding issues through the complaints case on our housing management system.	
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions,	Yes	Template letters with prompts are used to ensure all these points are captured.	

	referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.			
6.19	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the complaint stage;</li> <li>b. the complaint definition;</li> <li>c. the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>d. the reasons for any decisions made;</li> <li>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</li> <li>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</li> <li>g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.</li> </ul>	Yes	Template letters with prompts are used to ensure all these points are captured.	
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	The Stage 2 complaints panel is made up of the Feedback Manager, the Service Manager Customer Experience and the Service Director Customer Service Operations which ensures consistency in the process. This also enables an overview of all Stage 2 complaints to be taken which ensure they have been fairly and consistently handled.	

			All Stage 2 complaint letters are approved by the Service Director Customer Service Operations before sending to the customer with arrangements	
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## 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"> <li>• Apologising;</li> <li>• Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;</li> <li>• Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;</li> <li>• Taking action if there has been delay;</li> <li>• Reconsidering or changing a decision;</li> <li>• Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;</li> <li>• Providing a financial remedy;</li> <li>• Changing policies, procedures or practices.</li> </ul>	Yes	Response templates are in place to ensure this is captured and actioned	

7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	All outcomes and remedies are decided with the customer in mind, this includes considering impact of the issue	
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		
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes		

## Section 8: Putting things right

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"> <li>a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.</li> <li>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;</li> <li>c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;</li> <li>d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;</li> <li>e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and</li> <li>f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.</li> </ul>	Yes	This will be completed annually by the Service Manager Customer Experience	

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	This will be shared with the MRC and will be shared on our website	
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	The self-assessment will be redone following any significant change	
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes		
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		



## 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	This forms part of the learning practice when closing complaints down We are in the process of creating a complaints customer panel where we will use real life case studies to improve learning	
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	We use data and insight to look at trends and themes within complaints to help shape our future services Quarterly meetings are held with Service Managers to address recurrent complaints and seek improvements	
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	Service Manager Customer Experience attends the Customer Feedback Panel meetings to discuss complaint information and how we learn from complaints	
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues,	Yes	Our Service Director Customer Service Operations is the accountable lead person	

	serious risks, or policies and 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	We have a MRC in place	
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	This will be provided by the Service Manager Customer Experience	
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	Yes	This will be provided by the Service Manager Customer Experience	

	orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.			
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: a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.	Yes	Training around responsibilities has been provided to all complaint handlers	