



**WELWYN  
HATFIELD**

## **Draft Self-assessment form (August 2024)**

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	<a href="http://welhat.gov.uk">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	
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	<a href="http://welhat.gov.uk">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	
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	Yes	<a href="http://welhat.gov.uk">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	



## WELWYN HATFIELD

	are not complaints, but must be 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	<a href="http://welhat.gov.uk">Complaints – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a> <a href="#">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	We encourage our customers to complete our online complaints form, which enables a complaint to be automatically created.  Complaints can also be received via email, post or face to face in our main Campus East reception.
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.	No		'How to make a complaint' to be included on all survey forms, including quarterly TSM survey.

## 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	<a href="http://welhat.gov.uk">Complaints – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>  <a href="http://welhat.gov.uk">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	<p>We encourage our customers to complete our online complaints form, which enables a complaint to be automatically created.</p> <p>Complaints can also be received via email, post or face to face in our main Campus East reception.</p>
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> </ul>	Yes	<a href="http://welhat.gov.uk">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	



## WELWYN HATFIELD

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><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><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		The policy accepts complaints within 12 months.
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	<a href="https://welhat.gov.uk">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	Housing Ombudsman not currently referenced at this point in the Complaints policy. This has been included as part of the policy updates considered and agreed by Cabinet in August 2024. Process updates and staff training on the changes is now underway.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they	Yes		

	must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.			
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### 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	<p>We encourage our customers to complete our online complaints form, which enables a complaint to be automatically created:  <a href="http://welhat.gov.uk">Complaints – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>Complaints can also be received via email, post or face to face in our main Campus East reception:  <a href="http://welhat.gov.uk">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>Our Complaints Policy is available in a clear and accessible format on our website:</p>	<p>Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion training is mandatory for all employees of the council.</p> <p>We are introducing a new Resident Vulnerability Policy. This was considered and approved by Cabinet in August 2024.</p>



			<p><a href="#">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>We also publish a shorter version on our website: <a href="#">Complaints – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>We have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy and action plan in place: <a href="#">Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a></p>	
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	Training guides/information on intranet	Staff receive in-house training on our complaints policy and systems.  Staff with responsibility for Housing Complaints have all attended the HQN Complaints Handling Workshop: <a href="#">Complaint handling workshop - HQN (hqnetwork.co.uk)</a>



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	Complaint data	The number of complaints received is shared on a weekly basis to operational teams, monthly basis to Senior Leadership Team and a quarterly basis to Cabinet.
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	<p>Our Complaints Policy is available in a clear and accessible format on our website:</p> <p><a href="https://www.welhat.gov.uk/complaints-policy-and-procedure">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>We also publish a shorter version on our website:</p> <p><a href="https://www.welhat.gov.uk/complaints">Complaints – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a></p>	
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	<p><a href="https://www.welhat.gov.uk/complaints-policy-and-procedure">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a></p>	<p>The Housing Ombudsman contact details are published in the Council's Complaints policy.</p> <p>The Housing Ombudsman contact details are provided in our Stage 1 and Stage 2</p>





				<p>complaint responses, with complaint template responses available on the intranet for staff. This is also covered in staff training.</p> <p>We produce a quarterly resident's newsletter and the Housing Ombudsman details will be shared in every issue from Summer 2024.</p> <p>The council will include the Housing Ombudsman details in the contact page of the borough-wide ONE magazine (distributed twice per year).</p> <p>The Housing Ombudsman contact details have been promoted and shared with Residents Panel.</p>
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	<a href="https://www.welhat.gov.uk/complaints-policy-and-procedure">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	Our complaints policy identifies that representatives can act on behalf of a complainant.

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	<a href="#">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	The Housing Ombudsman details are shared in our Stage 1 and Stage 2 responses.  Also, refer to 3.5 above.
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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		The Council's Customer Services and Transformation teams take responsibility for complaint handling. The council does not have a centralised complaints team with the specialist teams providing complaint responses; however, complaints are logged, with performance monitored and support provided by the Customer Service and Transformation teams.  Housing Ombudsman cases are also logged and co-ordinated centrally by the



				Customer Services and Transformation teams.
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		Staff have access to staff at all levels across to support them to resolve complaints.
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively	Yes		<p>In line with the councils' complaints policy, the complaint will be investigated and responded to by an appropriate officer from the service concerned. This would usually be the person who has direct responsibility for the staff involved or the issue complained about.</p> <p>Staff with responsibility for Housing Complaints have all attended the HQN Complaints Handling Workshop: <u><a href="#">Complaint handling workshop - HQN (hqnetwork.co.uk)</a></u></p>

				<p>In-house training is also provided.</p> <p>Further complaint training for staff has been identified as an action following the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Survey 2024: <a href="#">Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Survey 2024 – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a></p>
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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	<a href="#">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	We have one complaints policy.
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	<a href="#">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	The council does not implement a 'stage 0' or 'pre-complaint' stage and all new complaints are logged at Stage 1 of the council's complaint procedure.

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	<a href="#">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	We implement a two-stage (Stage 1 & Stage 2) complaints 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		Our key contractors work within our complaints process.
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes		See 5.4
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	Refer to our complaints policy: <a href="#">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	Once a complaint is logged, there is the opportunity for the investigating officer to contact the complainant for more information.
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they	No		This is currently addressed as part of the Stage 1 or



## WELWYN HATFIELD

	are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.			Stage 2 response. This is being reviewed.
5.8	<p>At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:</p> <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		<p>Staff are trained to use the council complaint system and undertake mandatory data protection training.</p> <p>A good practice guide is in development, and we have a Complaints Insight Officer who will support teams to provide good quality responses.</p> <p>Response templates are also available for staff to use, and these are being updated</p>
5.9	<p>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.</p>	No		<p>This was included in the Complaint Policy update considered and agreed by Cabinet in August 2024.</p> <p>A letter template for extended timescales will be developed for staff to use.</p>
5.10	<p>Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of</p>	No		<p>We are introducing a new Resident Vulnerability Policy. This was considered</p>



## WELWYN HATFIELD

	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.			and agreed by Cabinet in August 2024.  Work is underway to review record keeping.
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		There is no evidence to demonstrate we have refused 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 such as reports or surveys.	Yes		All complaint correspondence is saved to the complaint reference number in Jadu.  Staff are trained to add notes to the case which detail every step in the complaint investigation. The system logs every action in the case so there is a full record of the complaint.
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	Yes	<a href="https://www.welwyn-hatfield.gov.uk/council/council-pages/complaints-policy-and-procedure">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	Updates to the Redress and Compensation Policy to be considered by Cabinet in August 2024.



	at any stage of the complaints process 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	<p>Our Complaints Policy sets out how abusive and threatening behaviour will be managed:</p> <p><a href="http://welhat.gov.uk">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>The Council has a Staff Protection Policy in place.</p> <p>The Council has a Vexatious, Persistent and Abusive Behaviour Policy in place:</p> <p><a href="http://welhat.gov.uk">Vexatious, persistent and abusive behaviour policy – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a></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	Refer to 5.14.	



## 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		This is covered as part of staff training.
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	<a href="http://welhat.gov.uk">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	Complaints are logged and acknowledged within three Working Days.
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	<a href="http://welhat.gov.uk">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	The Council aims to respond to all complaints within 10 Working Days. If more than 10 working days is required, the complainant will be made aware of this and will be given a

				timeframe of when to expect a response.
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.	No		This is included in the Complaints Policy update and considered and agreed by Cabinet in August 2024. Process updates and staff training on the changes is now underway.
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.	No		This is included in the Complaints Policy update considered and agreed by Cabinet in August 2024. Process updates and staff training on the changes is now underway.
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.	No		This is included in the Complaint Policy update and considered by Cabinet in August 2024. Process updates and staff training on the changes is now underway.
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any	Yes		Complaint template responses are available on the council's intranet for



	decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.			staff. Expectations of information required in responses is also covered in staff training.  This will be reiterated in the good practice guide for staff.
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		Updated to Complaints Policy considered and by Cabinet in August 2024 to make this clear.  Expectations of information required in responses to be covered in training.  Further complaint training for staff has been identified as an action following the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Survey 2024: <a href="#">Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Survey 2024 – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>



				This will be reiterated in the good practice guide for staff.
6.9	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 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 stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.</li> </ul>	Yes		<p>Complaint template responses available on the council's intranet for staff. Expectations of information required in responses is also covered in training.</p> <p>Further complaint training for staff has been identified as an action following the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Survey 2024: <a href="#">Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Survey 2024 – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>This will be reiterated in the good practice guide for staff.</p>

Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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## WELWYN HATFIELD

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	<a href="#">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	
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	<a href="#">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	Complaints are logged and acknowledged within three Working Days.
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 will be covered as part of staff 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	<a href="#">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	Stage two requests will be investigated by someone more senior to the person who investigated the first stage or an equivalent level from an independent service.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <b>within 20 working days</b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	<a href="#">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>	This is to be included in the Complaint Policy update and considered by Cabinet in August 2024.
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the	No		This is to be included in the Complaint Policy update

	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.			and considered by Cabinet in August 2024.
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.	No		This is to be included in the Complaint Policy update and considered by Cabinet in August 2024.
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		This is to be included in the Complaint Policy update and considered by Cabinet in August 2024.
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		Complaint template responses are available on the council's intranet for staff. Expectations of information required in responses is also covered in staff training.  This will be reiterated in the good practice guide for staff.



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		<p>Complaint template responses available on the council's intranet for staff. Expectations of information required in responses is also covered in training.</p> <p>Further complaint training for staff has been identified as an action following the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Survey 2024: <a href="#">Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Survey 2024 – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>This will be reiterated in the good practice guide for staff.</p>
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		

**Section 7: Putting things right**

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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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	<p><a href="https://www.welhat.gov.uk/complaints-policy-and-procedure">Complaints policy and procedure – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a></p>	<p>Complaints Policy and Redress and Compensation Policy to be updated and considered by Cabinet in August 2024.</p> <p>Expectations of information required in responses to be covered in training.</p> <p>Further complaint training for staff has been identified as an action following the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Survey 2024: <a href="https://www.welhat.gov.uk/tenant-satisfaction-measures-tsm-survey-2024">Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Survey 2024 – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>This will be reiterated in the good practice guide for staff.</p>
7.2	<p>Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.</p>	Yes		Refer to 7.1.
7.3	<p>The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where</p>	Yes		Refer to 7.1.





## WELWYN HATFIELD

	appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.			
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes		Refer to 7.1.

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

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>	No		<p>Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report to be reported to Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee in Autumn 2024. This will include the 23-24 Housing Ombudsman Annual report.</p> <p>The report will be published on our website.</p>



## WELWYN HATFIELD

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.	No		Refer to 8.1.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes		The council will carry out a self-assessment as required in line with the code.
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes		The council will carry out a self-assessment as required by the Housing 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 the Council is unable to comply, we will inform the Housing Ombudsman at the earliest opportunity.

### 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.	No		Our approach to Lessons Learned is currently under review.
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.	No		Our approach to Lessons Learned is currently under review.
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		<p>Complaint information is published in the council's Annual Report.</p> <p>Where complaint performance targets are not met, they will be published as part of our performance exception reporting.</p> <p>The Complaints process has been reviewed by our Resident's Panel.</p>



## WELWYN HATFIELD

9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Yes		Assistant Director (Customer Services & Transformation)  <a href="http://welhat.gov.uk">Workforce information – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>
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		Executive Member, Leisure & Community  <a href="http://welhat.gov.uk">Councillor details - Councillor Jane Quinton – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (welhat.gov.uk)</a>
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		Refer to 9.5.
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;	Yes		Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report to be reported to Overview & Scrutiny Committee.



	<p>b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;</p> <p>c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and</p> <p>d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.</p>			<p>Quarterly complaint performance is reported to Cabinet monthly.</p> <p>Monthly complaint performance to be reported to Corporate Governance Group and Senior Leadership Team.</p>
9.8	<p>Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:</p> <p>a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</p> <p>b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and</p> <p>c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.</p>	Yes		<p>Complaints Policy updated and considered and agreed by Cabinet in August 2024.</p>