

**Self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code and the Local Government and Social Housing Ombudsman’s Code: June 2024**

Code Section	Code Requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary and Any Explanations
<b>Section 1 - Definition of a complaint</b>				
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 organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.’</i>	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 1.1 and 4.6:</b> Brunelcare follows the Ombudsman’s definition of a complaint. The policy defines a complaint as:</p> <p><i>an expression of dissatisfaction (written or verbal, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by Brunelcare, its employees, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual customer or group of customers.</i></p>	The word ‘residents’ has been changed to ‘customers’ to cover all Brunelcare services (clients, guests, residents).
1.3	A resident does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such.	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 4.7:</b> <i>A customer does not need to use the word ‘complaint’ for a concern they have raised to be treated as such.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints policy para 3.6</b> <i>A complaint will be raised if a</i></p>	

	<p>Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make a complaint.</p> <p>A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.</p>		<p><i>customer remains dissatisfied with the response to their service request.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 4.10</b>  <i>A complaint may be made by a person (representative) acting on behalf of another person in any cases where that individual:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Has died.</i></li> <li>- <i>Is unable to by reason of physical or mental incapacity to make a complaint themselves.</i></li> <li>- <i>Has requested the representative to act on their behalf.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>We will accept a complaint made on a customer's behalf through an advocate, for example, from a friend, support worker, relative or MP. Where complaints are made through an advocate we will, where appropriate need to confirm this with the customer</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 8.2:</b>  <i>if the complainant is complaining on behalf of someone else, consideration will be given as to whether consent is needed to investigate the complaint;</i></p>	
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a	Yes	<b>Complaints Policy Para 7.6:</b> <i>examples of the type of concern that</i>	

	<p>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.</p>		<p><i>can be resolved at the local resolution stage are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>an appointment was made for a boiler to be fixed and the tenant raises a concern that no-one turned up on the appointed day;</i></li> <li>• <i>someone raises a concern that their bin hasn't been emptied by the refuse collection service when it should have been;</i></li> <li>• <i>a client is unhappy about the menu choices.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>However, an example of the type of concern that should not be resolved at the informal stage is when:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>the concern involves issues where it appears a service failure has occurred due to an obvious systemic problem.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 3.5:</b>  <i>Also excluded from the complaints policy are "service requests" – A service request is defined as a request from a customer that requires action to be taken to put something right. It will usually be the first time we have been contacted about an issue and have not previously had the opportunity to investigate the concerns and agree what action we will take to resolve the issue.</i></p>	
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1.5	<p>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.</p>	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 3.6:</b>  <i>A complaint will be raised if a customer remains dissatisfied with the response to their service request. This will include matters where customers are not happy with a situation and are asking us to confirm the actions we will take to resolve the situation. If a customer remains dissatisfied after receiving our response, a complaint will be raised. We recognise that some customers will immediately ask for a complaint to be raised even though we have not had an opportunity to set out our position.</i></p>	
1.6	<p>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.</p> <p>Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.</p>	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 7.9:</b>  <i>Comments and concerns may also be received via a number of mechanisms including satisfaction surveys, customer workshops and discussion groups. Brunelcare will ensure that feedback on the action taken to address issues raised via such mechanisms is publicised.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 7.8:</b>  <i>Employees must advise individuals on how to progress their comments/concerns to the formal complaints process (stage 1), if they are not satisfied with the outcome at the end of the informal stage.</i></p>	<p>The results of the Customer Surveys are reviewed by the relevant team for issues raised that may constitute a complaint and where necessary escalated for further review/investigation.</p>

Section 2: Exclusions				
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	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 3.4</b> sets out exceptions. This sets out a list of when an issue will not be considered under the complaints policy.</p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 3.7:</b> <i>Where we cannot consider a complaint within our policy, we will explain why and offer advice or support to customers to try and help them resolve the issue.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 5.1</b> includes key principles to be followed in considering a complaint, including for customers, <i>'bearing in mind their individual circumstances and needs.'</i></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> <li>• Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of</li> </ul>	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 3.4</b> sets out exceptions. This sets out a list of when an issue will not be considered under the complaints policy.</p>	

	<p>Claim, having been filed at court.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.</li> </ul>			
2.3	<p>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.</p> <p>Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.</p>	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 3.8:</b>  <i>A complaint must be made within 12 months of the date on which the matter occurred, or within 12 months of the date on which the matter came to the notice of the complainant. When a complaint is made outside the time limit, it will be for the Company Secretary &amp; Head of Corporate Governance to decide whether or not to waive the time limit. The time limit will not apply if the complainant had good reasons for not making the complaint within the time limit, and it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly. A decision not to extend beyond the 12-month time limit will be confirmed in writing with an explanation.</i></p>	
2.4	<p>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.</p> <p>If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied,</p>	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 3.7:</b>  <i>Where we cannot consider a complaint within our policy, we will explain why and offer advice or support to customers to try and help them resolve the issue.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 9.12:</b>  <i>The Complaints Officer will provide support to individuals to ensure that they have all the information they</i></p>	

	the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.		<i>need to contact the most appropriate organisation or Ombudsman. Further details are set out in the Comment, Concerns, Complaints and Compliments Procedure.</i>	
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	<b>Complaints Policy para 5.1</b> includes key principles to be followed in considering a complaint, including being customer focused and <i>'bearing in mind their individual circumstances and needs.'</i>  See also <b>Complaints Policy para 8.2.</b>	
<b>Section 3 - Accessibility and awareness</b>				
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	<b>Complaints Policy para 4.6:</b> <i>A complaint may be clinical or non-clinical and can be made:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>in person;</i></li> <li>● <i>by telephone;</i></li> <li>● <i>using the form on Brunelcare's website</i></li> <li>● <i>using social media</i></li> <li>● <i>video call; or</i></li> <li>● <i>in writing (by letter or e-mail).</i></li> </ul> <b>Complaints Policy para 5.1</b> considers accessibility and easy access/regular advice that is provided to customers. Also makes clear that complainants are treated impartially, and without unlawful	

			<p>discrimination and prejudice.</p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 6.6</b>  <i>No complainant will be discriminated against for any reason and the Charity is committed to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 6.9:</b>  <i>Brunelcare is committed to making its complaints procedure as easily accessible as possible. We recognise that some people may find it difficult to access our complaints process and/or explain their concerns. We will offer advice and support on submitting a complaint where required by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Considering all requests for reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 and will implement adjustments where it is practicable to do so.</i></li> <li>• <i>Sharing information in a way that meets the customers' individual need.</i></li> <li>• <i>Providing complaints management information in different languages and formats on request (e.g. audio tape and web based and easy read) to meet the needs of individuals.</i></li> <li>• <i>Providing support through the Complaints Officer or</i></li> </ul>	
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			<p><i>signposting to independent advocacy services.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Using trained interpreters, when required, and ensuring interpreting services are aware of the complaints management process.</i></li> <li>● <i>Meeting complainants when face to face contact is necessary, at mutually agreeable venues.</i></li> <li>● <i>Ensuring that those with physical, mental impairment or learning disabilities are able to access the service.</i></li> <li>● <i>Ensuring that complainants are treated with courtesy and that they receive appropriate support throughout the handling of a complaint; and reassured that the fact that they have complained will not affect their future treatment.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 16.1:</b>  <i>Making a complaint does not mean that a client/tenant/complainant will receive less help or that things will be made difficult for them. Brunelcare seeks to embed an environment where all clients, visitors and employees are treated as individuals, fairly and in a consistent way. We work within the spirit and the practice of the Equality Act 2010 by promoting a culture of</i></p>	
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			<p><i>respect and dignity and actively challenging discrimination, should it ever arise. This Policy will be applied in a way that is consistent with these principles.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 16.2:</b>  <i>Employees must also ensure that customers and their relatives/carers are not discriminated against when a complaint is made and that their ongoing care will be unaffected. To help achieve this aim, all staff are made aware when in receipt of a complaint that complaint records must be kept separate from care records. Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that this is monitored when reviewing the investigation responses to complaints and for considering whether it may be more appropriate in the circumstances for their care to be transferred to another team.</i></p>	
3.2	<p>Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff.</p> <p>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>	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 4.6:</b>  <i>A complaint may be clinical or non-clinical and can be made:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>in person;</i></li> <li>● <i>by telephone;</i></li> <li>● <i>using the form on Brunelcare's website</i></li> <li>● <i>using social media</i></li> <li>● <i>video call; or</i></li> <li>● <i>in writing (by letter or e-mail).</i></li> </ul>	<p>All new employees are informed of the Charity's complaints process during their induction and complaints meetings are held with all managers with support from the Charity's Complaints Officer.</p> <p>Posters/leaflets have been distributed to all customers and sites with employees further reminded of the process through noticeboards.</p>

3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.	Yes	This is emphasised during complaints reporting which is presented to, and discussed by, the Board's Performance, Quality and Experience (PQ&E) Committee. Complaints performance figures are reported to the Board through the Assurance Report of the Chair of the PQ&E Committee.	
3.4	<p>Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents.</p> <p>This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at timeframes for responding. each stage, and the timeframes for responding.</p> <p>The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Brunelcare's Complaints Policy is available on the Charity's website which sets out the process in a simple, easy to follow format. The policy is available from all employees upon request and key points are summarised within posters, leaflets and newsletters.</p> <p>This process is made clear within all complaints literature shared with customers (i.e. Policy, leaflets, posters, website page).</p> <p>For customers who are unable to access digital channels, a printed version of the Complaints policy will be provided. A link/copy of the policy is included with the complaint acknowledgement letter.</p> <p>The Complaints Officer continues to review all information available to customers and ways to further develop this in consultation with customers.</p>	

			<p><b>Complaints Policy para 6.10:</b>  <i>Information about the Charity's Managing Concerns, Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy and related procedure will be widely publicised. The Policy will be explained to all new customers accessing Brunelcare services and where relevant to their families, by providing them with a copy of the Charity's 'How are we doing?' leaflet. Where possible, an 'easy read' version of the policy and procedure will be advertised on notice boards and reminders of the process will be given regularly at customer and team meetings, where appropriate. The Policy will also be available on Brunelcare's website.</i></p>	
3.5	<p>The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.</p>	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 6.10:</b>  <i>Information about the Charity's Managing Concerns, Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy and related procedure will be widely publicised. The Policy will be explained to all new customers accessing Brunelcare services and where relevant to their families, by providing them with a copy of the Charity's 'How are we doing?' leaflet. Where possible, an 'easy read' version of the policy and procedure will be advertised on notice boards and reminders of the process will be given regularly at customer and team meetings, where appropriate. The Policy will also be</i></p>	<p>Policy makes it clear that customers will be made aware of the Charity's complaints policy and process, as well as Ombudsman details shared at all points of contact (para 7.8).</p>

			available on Brunelcare's website.	
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	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 4.10</b>  <i>A complaint may be made by a person (representative) acting on behalf of another person in any cases where that individual:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Has died</i></li> <li>• <i>Is unable to by reason of physical or mental incapacity to make a complaint themselves.</i></li> <li>• <i>Has requested the representative to act on their behalf.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>We will accept a complaint made on a customer's behalf through an advocate, for example, from a friend, support worker, relative or MP. Where complaints are made through an advocate we will, where appropriate need to confirm this with the customer.</i></p> <p>Customers are informed of the following when their complaint is acknowledged:  <i>If you are complaining on behalf of someone else: a family member, friend or neighbour, we will ask for permission from the individual (or proof of Power of Attorney) before we share with you any data relating to their health or finances. Please be advised that you have the opportunity for a representative to deal with your complaint either with you or on your behalf and they may accompany you to any meeting you have with Brunelcare.</i></p>	

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	<p><b>Complaint Policy Para 7.8</b> <i>Individuals must be notified of how they can access the relevant Ombudsman Service at all stages of contact.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy Para 9.12</b> <i>The Complaints Officer will provide support to individuals to ensure that they have all the information they need to contact the most appropriate Ombudsman.</i></p>	<p>Signposting to the Housing Ombudsman is contained in complaint acknowledgement and outcome template letters. This provides contact information to the customer of how they can contact the Ombudsman Service at any time during their complaint.</p> <p>In addition, leaflets, posters and articles on the complaints annual report/process included in the Spring 2024 edition of Grapevine outline the role Ombudsman and relevant contact details.</p>
<b>Section 4 - Complaint handling staff</b>				
4.1	<p>Landlords <b>must</b> 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).</p> <p>This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.</p>	Yes	<p>Brunelcare has a Complaints Officer in place who forms part of the Corporate Governance Team. The role of the Complaints Officer is outlined within <b>Complaints Policy para 6.7</b> and additional support offered noted within para 6.9 and 9.12.</p> <p>Responsibilities of the Complaints Officer are included within <b>Complaints Policy para 15.7</b>.</p>	
4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints.	Yes	<p>The Complaints Officer is part of the Corporate Governance Team and has access to staff at all levels.</p> <p>Responsibilities of the Complaints Officer are included within</p>	

	They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.		<b>Complaints Policy Para 15.7.</b>	
<b>4.3</b>	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	All new employees are informed of the Charity's complaints process during their induction and complaints meetings are held with all managers with support from the Charity's Complaints Officer.  <b>Complaints Policy para 15.1-15.10</b> outline the roles and responsibilities for different employees throughout the complaints process.	
<b>Section 5 - The complaint handling process</b>				
<b>5.1</b>	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	Brunelcare has a single Complaints Policy in place which covers the Charity's centralised complaints process across all services.  <b>Complaints Policy para 16.1:</b> <i>Making a complaint does not mean that a client/tenant/complainant will receive less help or that things will be made difficult for them. Brunelcare seeks to embed an environment where all clients, visitors and employees are treated as individuals, fairly and in a consistent way.</i>  <b>Complaints Policy para 16.2:</b> <i>Employees must also ensure that customers and their relatives/carers</i>	

			<i>are not discriminated against when a complaint is made and that their ongoing care will be unaffected.</i>	
<b>5.2</b>	<p>The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling.</p> <p>It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.</p>	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 7.1:</b>  <i>All employees who receive a comment or concern will make every attempt to try to resolve the matter raised as they arise. Brunelcare's process offers the opportunity for informal engagement at the point of service delivery to seek to resolve at the time the concern arises or very shortly thereafter. This is part of front line service delivery and not viewed as separate from it. This first step will normally be addressed by an explanation or other appropriate remedial action by frontline colleagues.</i></p> <p>See also <b>Complaints Policy para 7.5.</b></p>	
<b>5.3</b>	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	Brunelcare's <b>Complaints Policy</b> is clear that only two stages are used (see <b>Section 8</b> and <b>Section 10</b> )	
<b>5.4</b>	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.	Yes	All complaints regarding Brunelcare's services are handled by Brunelcare under the Complaints Policy and any 3rd party contractors would contribute to the investigation.	



	Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.			
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	All complaints regarding Brunelcare's services are handled by Brunelcare under the Complaints Policy and any 3rd party contractors would contribute to the investigation.	
5.6	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 8.2</b> contains the following:  <i>If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the complainant will be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.</i>  <i>The Complaints Officer will offer to discuss the matter with the complainant, and will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the complainant will be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.</i></li> <li>- <i>confirm with them their preferred method of communication, the frequency of communication and the outcome they are seeking.</i></li> <li>- <i>issue an acknowledgement letter setting out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the complainant is seeking.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Complaint acknowledgement letters at each stage of the complaints process set out the complaint definition and outcomes sought by the customer. These are repeated in outcome letters.</p> <p>Correspondence accompanying the initial acknowledgement letter asks for complainants to confirm Brunelcare's understanding of the complaint definition and outcomes sought. The customer is provided with the opportunity to add or amend to the listed definition and outcomes sought.</p>
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are,	Yes	See 5.6 above. All complaints are initially triaged by the Complaints Officer who is fully aware of the Complaints Policy, its scope,	

	and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.		<p>exclusions and how to manage expectations.</p> <p>Any areas deemed not the responsibility of Brunelcare will be made clear when acknowledging the complaint and agreeing a complaint definition.</p>	
<b>5.8</b>	<p>At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:</p> <ol 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> </ol>	Yes	<p>See <b>Complaints Policy Para 5.1, Section 9</b> and <b>Complaints Procedure</b>.</p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 8.2:</b> <i>having satisfied themselves that they sufficiently understand the details of the complaint, the Complaints Officer will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>grade the seriousness of the complaint to decide the appropriate level of investigation;</i></li> <li>- <i>identify an officer within the Charity with sufficient seniority, credibility and independence from the source of the complaint to undertake the investigation (depending on the nature of the complaint, this may still be someone within the service directorate but it may require someone independent from the service/directorate);</i></li> </ul>	<p>As part of the complaint investigation, the individual undertaking the investigation is required to liaise with colleagues regarding the concerns raised. The colleague will have the opportunity to set out their position and comment on any observations made.</p> <p>Where permissible to do so and having due regard to data protection and confidentiality, we will contact customers to understand all points of view before issuing a final complaint decision.</p> <p>Further, the Complaints Officer provides impartial advice and guidance notes to the complaints investigator, where appropriate.</p>

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><b>Complaints Policy para 8.3:</b>  <i>The Stage 1 complaints process should normally be concluded within 10 working days of the complaint being logged. Where this is not possible complainants will be informed of the reasons and the date by which the investigation will be concluded. In any event, there will be regular contact with the complainant, updating them on progress on the case. If an extension beyond 20 working days is required in order to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed with the complainant. Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, the relevant Ombudsman's contact details will be provided so the complainant can challenge the plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of the response.</i></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	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 6.6 and 6.9:</b>  <i>No complainant will be discriminated against for any reason and the Charity is committed to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.</i></p> <p><i>Brunelcare is committed to making its complaints procedure as easily accessible as possible. We recognise that some people may find it difficult to access our complaints process and/or explain</i></p>	

			<p><i>their concerns. We will offer advice and support on submitting a complaint where required by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Considering all requests for reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 and will implement adjustments where it is practicable to do so.</i></li> <li>• <i>Sharing information in a way that meets the customers' individual need.</i></li> <li>• <i>Providing complaints management information in different languages and formats on request (e.g. audio tape and web based and easy read) to meet the needs of individuals.</i></li> <li>• <i>Providing support through the Complaints Officer or signposting to independent advocacy services.</i></li> <li>• <i>Using trained interpreters, when required, and ensuring interpreting services are aware of the complaints management process.</i></li> <li>• <i>Meeting complainants when face to face contact is necessary, at mutually agreeable venues.</i></li> <li>• <i>Ensuring that those with physical, mental impairment or learning disabilities are able to access the service.</i></li> </ul>	
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ensuring that complainants are treated with courtesy and that they receive appropriate support throughout the handling of a complaint; and reassured that the fact that they have complained will not affect their future treatment.</i></li> </ul> <p>Reasonable adjustments agreed and disclosed disabilities are recorded alongside complaints information and kept under review throughout future contact with the customer.</p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 8.2:</b>  <i>The Complaints Officer will offer to discuss the matter with the complainant, and will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>help the person who is complaining to understand the process;</i></li> <li>- <i>confirm with them their preferred method of communication, the frequency of communication and the outcome they are seeking.</i></li> <li>- <i>provide advice of relevant advocacy and support services, for example Shelter and the Citizens Advice Bureau if they need help in making their complaint.</i></li> </ul>	
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<p><b>5.11</b></p>	<p>Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so.</p> <p>Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Brunelcare will ensure that a complaint will be escalated through all stages of the complaints process as appropriate. The Complaints Officer will ensure that the complainant is supported to do this.</p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 10.1:</b>  <i>If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint they can progress to Stage 2 by contacting the Complaints Officer and requesting a review of their complaint. A request to progress the complaint to stage 2 must be submitted within 10 working days of receiving the stage 1 outcome letter.</i></p>	
<p><b>5.12</b></p>	<p>A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>A shared complaints mailbox and record folders are in place and managed by the Complaints Officer and key members of the Corporate Governance Team. This mailbox allows customers to send in evidence and communications and updates to be provided regarding complaints.</p> <p>A complaints log is maintained which details all relevant information and references key documentation. All emails, telephone conversations, and complaint correspondence are held together in clearly labelled folders named with the complaint's unique reference number.</p> <p>The Charity's Cx housing system is</p>	

			used to record housing complaints. A later review will be undertaken to assess whether this system can be developed to record complaints across other areas of the Charity.	
<b>5.13</b>	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><b>Complaints Policy Section 9</b> covers the complaints investigation process. The Complaints Officer manages the complaints investigation and outcome process and will ensure that any remedies or resolution can be taken forward at any point of the complaints process without the need for further escalation.</p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 8.2:</b> <i>The Complaints Officer will keep track of (and record) progress and take responsibility for monitoring the smooth running of the investigation, ensuring that timescales are met.</i></p>	
<b>5.14</b>	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	<b>Complaints Policy Section 14</b> covers this area and related procedures in detail.	
<b>5.15</b>	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	<b>Complaints Policy Section 14 and para 14.6</b> confirms this and that the Company Secretary and Director of Corporate Governance needs to be involved in decisions of this nature.	

			<p><b>Complaints Policy para 6.6:</b>  <i>No complainant will be discriminated against for any reason and the Charity is committed to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.</i></p> <p>Also <b>Complaints Policy para 6.6</b> and <b>6.9</b> (above).</p>	
<b>Section 6 - Complaints stages</b>				
<b>Stage 1</b>				
<b>6.1</b>	<p>Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation.</p> <p>Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk.</p> <p>Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.</p>	Yes	<p>Brunelcare has a two stage complaints process in place. This follows key principles to complaint handling (Complaints Policy Section 5).</p> <p>Resident vulnerabilities and any adjustments required are recorded through the complaints process.</p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 6.7:</b>  <i>Brunelcare will operate a single point of access via the Complaints Officer who is part of the Corporate Governance Department. The Complaints Officer will triage all comments, concerns and complaints raised by telephone, e-mail and letter. This approach provides clients, tenants, relatives, carers and the general public with easy access whether they wish to offer a comment, pass on a</i></p>	



			<p><i>compliment, raise a concern or get support or make a formal complaint.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 8.1:</b>  <i>'Investigate once, investigate well' is the principle for this stage of the process. One investigation that addresses thoroughly all concerns raised should be undertaken, rather than multiple investigations at different levels in the organisation which can result in protracted and sometimes open-ended investigations. However, the Stage 1 element of the complaints process is intended to be flexible to respond appropriately to the complaint. "Investigating well" also means conducting an investigation in a manner that is proportionate to the nature and degree of seriousness of the complaint. Proportionate means that for those complaints not so serious in their nature, the investigation may not need to be so detailed.</i></p> <p>See also <b>Complaints Policy para 8.2</b> and <b>Section 9.</b></p>	
<b>6.2</b>	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the complaint being received.	Yes	All complaints are defined, categorised, logged and progressed through the Complaints recording mechanism. Each site has its own log and the information is fed through to the central log that only the Complaints Officer, Performance and Governance Manager and	

			<p>Company Secretary &amp; Director of Corporate Governance have access to. The Complaints Officer monitors and records information within the complaints logs. The Cx Housing system is used to record and monitor housing complaints.</p> <p>Progress and case notes are added to the complaint to create an audit trail of decisions and actions taken.</p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 8.2:</b> <i>all Stage 1 complaints will be formally acknowledged in writing by the Complaints Officer as soon as is possible, but within a maximum of three working days.</i></p>	
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 8.3:</b> <i>The Stage 1 complaints process should normally be concluded within 10-working days of the complaint being logged. Where this is not possible complainants will be informed of the reasons and the date by which the investigation will be concluded. In any event, there will be regular contact with the complainant, updating them on progress on the case.</i></p> <p>This is also reinforced in the Complaints Log and on our website.</p>	
6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 8.3:</b> <i>The Stage 1 complaints process should normally be concluded within</i></p>	

	<p>complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response.</p> <p>Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.</p>		<p><i>10-working days of the complaint being logged. Where this is not possible complainants will be informed of the reasons and the date by which the investigation will be concluded. In any event, there will be regular contact with the complainant, updating them on progress on the case.</i></p> <p>Any extension beyond 10 working days is agreed with the complainant with the reasons discussed and explained. The Complaints Officer, in conjunction with the investigating officer will decide whether an extension is required which will take into account the complaint's complexity.</p>	
6.5	<p>When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.</p>	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 7.8:</b> <i>Individuals must be notified of how they can access the relevant Ombudsman Service at all stages of contact.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 8.3:</b> <i>If an extension beyond 20 working days is required in order to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed with the complainant. Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, the relevant Ombudsman's contact details will be provided so the complainant can challenge the plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of</i></p>	

			<p><i>the response.</i></p> <p>Complainants are provided with the Ombudsman’s contact details at all stages of contact.</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.</p> <p>Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.</p>	Yes	<p>Complaint template letters are available for the complaint lead to use which will communicate the response to the complaint and actions we are proposing to take to resolve. This is sent once the complaint has been investigated and an answer known. This letter lists the actions proposed to be taken and timescales, if available.</p> <p>If the customer chooses to leave the complaint open while works are being carried out, a final complaint outcome letter will be issued when the complaint is closed.</p> <p>Outstanding actions are entered onto the complaints record log by the Complaints Officer and these will be continuously monitored to ensure that the actions progress to agreed timescales in liaison with those assigned actions related to the complaint.</p> <p>See <b>Complaints Policy para 9.6.</b></p>	
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	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 9.5:</b>  <i>At the end of an investigation a written outcome should be set out in a formal letter and in more serious</i></p>	

	good practice where appropriate.		<p><i>cases a report.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 9.6:</b>  <i>Where a report is produced this should include where appropriate:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>confirmation of the investigation stage</i></li> <li>● <i>the complaint definition</i></li> <li>● <i>the scope of the investigation</i></li> <li>● <i>a summary of the investigation, including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>details of key issues, setting out a brief chronology of events leading to the complaint)</i></li> <li>○ <i>those who were interviewed (including setting out to what degree the complainant, and if appropriate, any affected relatives, advocates, etc. were involved in the investigation)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>● <i>conclusion - if the complaint is found to be justified/upheld this should include details of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>what happened - i.e. what went wrong</i></li> <li>○ <i>why it happened – i.e. the root cause of the problem (e.g.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
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			<p><i>human error, a systemic failure)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>what impact did it have on the complainant if a systemic failure has been identified, an explanation of actions taken to put things right, with a view to ensuring the same problem does not occur again</i></li> <li>○ <i>if appropriate, an apology</i></li> <li>○ <i>if appropriate, an offer of redress</i></li> <li>○ <i>details of any outstanding actions</i></li> <li>○ <i>details of how to escalate the complaint to stage 2 if the complainant is not satisfied with the response.</i></li> <li>○ <i>details of how to contact the relevant Ombudsman.</i></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>If the complaint has not been upheld, there should be an explanation of why this conclusion has been reached, demonstrating that it has been arrived at based on the evidence gathered.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Overall, the report should demonstrate throughout that the complaint has been taken seriously,</i></p>	
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			<i>that the investigation undertaken has been fair and, in accord with the seriousness of the complaint, proportionately thorough.</i>	
<b>6.8</b>	<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.</p> <p>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.</p>	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 9.5:</b> <i>At the end of an investigation a written outcome should be set out in a formal letter and in more serious cases a report. Where additional complaints are raised during the investigation, these should be incorporated into the stage one response if they are relevant and the stage one response has not been issued. Where the stage one response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the complaint should be logged as a new complaint.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Procedure – section 5.8</b> noted that in some cases the customer may raise other issues not directly in connection to the complaint during an investigation. These can be included in the complaint response but you should identify them separately.</p>	We are clear with the customer about the best way to address any additional concerns that are raised during the complaint conversations. This may be to incorporate the additional points into the complaint response, or in discussion with the customer we may raise a separate stage one complaint.
<b>6.9</b>	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the complaint stage;</li> <li>the complaint definition;</li> <li>the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>the reasons for any decisions made;</li> </ol>	Yes	<p>See <b>Complaints Policy para 9.5 and 9.6</b> (detailed above).</p> <p>Standard outcome template letters in place which are used and confirm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaint stage</li> <li>Complaint definition</li> </ul>	

	<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 stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The decision (upheld/not upheld)</li> <li>● Reasons for decisions made</li> <li>● Details of remedy offered</li> <li>● Action taken and any outstanding actions</li> <li>● How to escalate to stage 2</li> <li>● Contact details of the Ombudsman</li> </ul>	
<b>Stage 2</b>				
<b>6.10</b>	<p>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.</p>	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 10.1:</b> <i>If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint they can progress to Stage 2 by contacting the Complaints Officer and requesting a review of their complaint.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 10.2:</b> <i>The Complaints Officer will ensure the same process for Stage 1 will be followed regarding <b>Acknowledge, Investigate</b> and <b>Respond</b>. The same timescales will apply.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 10.3</b> <i>The Complaints Officer will escalate the complaint to a more senior investigating officer. It may be necessary to arrange an interview with the complainant in order to discuss the matter further and understand the reasons why they were unhappy with the response from Stage 1.</i></p>	



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.		<p>Handling of the receipt of Stage 2 complaints is the same as Stage 1.</p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 10.2:</b>  <i>The Complaints Officer will ensure the same process for Stage 1 will be followed regarding <b>Acknowledge, Investigate and Respond.</b> The same timescales will apply.</i></p>	
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	It is recognised that reasons for escalating a complaint to Stage 2 are presented in a number of ways. Whilst the Stage 1 response letter asks a complainant to advise why they remain dissatisfied with the Stage 1 complaint to help understand the reason why the complaint has been escalated and inform the subsequent investigation, this is not required.	
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	<p>The Complaints Officer will identify an individual who is suitably independent to undertake the Stage 2 complaint investigation.</p> <p><b>Complaints Policy Paragraph 8.2</b>  <i>The Complaints Officer will: identify an officer within the Charity with sufficient seniority, credibility and independence from the source of the complaint to undertake the investigation (depending on the nature of the complaint, this may still be someone within the service directorate but it may require someone independent from the</i></p>	

			<p><i>service/directorate);</i></p> <p><i>when deciding on an “investigator”, the Complaints Officer will take account of whether the investigation will need to span across more than one service;</i></p>	
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 10.7:</b>  <i>A senior manager (not involved in Stage 1) will look at and consider the decision made at stage 1. This could involve meeting with or speaking to the customer to discuss the complaint and the possible next steps in resolving it. The timescales to respond will be agreed directly between the manager and the customer but will normally be no more than 20 working days from the date of the stage 2 complaint being received. If it will take longer than 20 working days, this will be agreed in advance with the customer and a full explanation provided.</i></p> <p><i>Brunelcare has a timeline of 20 days for Stage 2 complaints from the date of the complaint being received.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 10.8:</b>  <i>A stage 2 complaint must be responded to within 20 working days of the complaint being escalated.</i></p>	
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 10.7</b>  <i>The timescales to respond will be agreed directly between the manager and the customer but will</i></p>	Contact with the individual who made the complaint is maintained throughout by the Complaints Officer. The investigating officer will contact the

	<p>complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response.</p> <p>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>		<p><i>normally be no more than 20 working days from the date of the stage 2 complaint being received. If it will take longer than 20 working days, this will be agreed in advance with the customer and a full explanation provided.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 10.8</b>  <i>A stage 2 complaint must be responded to within 20 working days of the complaint being escalated. Exceptionally, an explanation may be provided to the complainant containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason. If an extension beyond 10 working days is required this should be agreed by both parties.</i></p>	<p>complainant and agree to a new deadline (this is outlined in the acknowledgement letter).</p>
<b>6.16</b>	<p>When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.</p>	Yes	<p>Contact details are provided by the Complaints Officer during all contact with the customer. Details are included within template letters.</p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 7.8:</b>  <i>Individuals must be notified of how they can access the relevant Ombudsman Service at all stages of contact.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 8.3:</b>  <i>If an extension beyond 20 working days is required in order to respond to the complaint fully, this should be</i></p>	

			<p><i>agreed with the complainant. Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, the relevant Ombudsman's contact details will be provided so the complainant can challenge the plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of the response.</i></p>	
6.17	<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.</p> <p>Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.</p>	Yes	<p>Complaint template letters are available for the complaint lead to use which will communicate the response to the complaint and actions we are proposing to take to resolve. This is sent once the complaint has been investigated and an answer known. This letter lists the actions proposed to be taken and timescales, if available.</p> <p>If the customer chooses to leave the complaint open while works are being carried out, a final complaint outcome letter will be issued when the complaint is closed.</p> <p>Outstanding actions are entered onto the complaints record log by the Complaints Officer and these will be continuously monitored to ensure that the actions progress to agreed timescales in liaison with those assigned actions related to the complaint.</p> <p>See <b>Complaints Policy para 9.6.</b></p>	

<p><b>6.18</b></p>	<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>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The same process will be followed for Stage 2 complaints as per Stage 1. This includes responding in full to all points raised in the complaint definition and clear reasons for any decisions with reference to relevant policy, law and good practice, where appropriate.</p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 10.2:</b> <i>The Complaints Officer will ensure the same process for Stage 1 is followed regarding Acknowledge, Investigate and Respond.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 9.5:</b> <i>At the end of an investigation a written outcome should be set out in a formal letter and in more serious cases a report.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 9.6:</b> <i>Where a report is produced this should include where appropriate:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>confirmation of the investigation stage</i></li> <li>● <i>the complaint definition</i></li> <li>● <i>the scope of the investigation</i></li> <li>● <i>a summary of the investigation, including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>details of key issues, setting out a brief chronology of events leading to the complaint)</i></li> <li>○ <i>those who were interviewed</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
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			<p><i>(including setting out to what degree the complainant, and if appropriate, any affected relatives, advocates, etc. were involved in the investigation)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>conclusion - if the complaint is found to be justified/upheld this should include details of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>what happened - i.e. what went wrong</i></li> <li>○ <i>why it happened – i.e. the root cause of the problem (e.g. human error, a systemic failure)</i></li> <li>○ <i>what impact did it have on the complainant if a systemic failure has been identified, an explanation of actions taken to put things right, with a view to ensuring the same problem does not occur again</i></li> <li>○ <i>if appropriate, an apology</i></li> <li>○ <i>if appropriate, an offer of redress</i></li> <li>○ <i>details of any outstanding actions</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ details of how to escalate the complaint to stage 2 if the complainant is not satisfied with the response.</li> <li>○ details of how to contact the relevant Ombudsman.</li> <li>● If the complaint has not been upheld, there should be an explanation of why this conclusion has been reached, demonstrating that it has been arrived at based on the evidence gathered.</li> </ul> <p>Overall, the report should demonstrate throughout that the complaint has been taken seriously, that the investigation undertaken has been fair and, in accord with the seriousness of the complaint, proportionately thorough.</p>	
<b>6.19</b>	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language:</p> <ol 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</li> </ol>	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 10.10:</b>  <i>The following will be confirmed in writing to the complainant at the completion of stage two in clear, plain language:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the complaint stage</li> <li>● the complaint definition</li> <li>● the decision on the complaint</li> <li>● the reasons for any decisions made</li> <li>● the details of any remedy offered to put things right</li> <li>● details of any outstanding</li> </ul>	

	Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.		<p><i>actions and details of how to escalate the matter to the relevant Ombudsman</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>actions and details of how to escalate the matter to the relevant Ombudsman</i></li> </ul> <p>Standard Stage 2 outcome template letters are in place which are used and confirm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaint stage</li> <li>• Complaint definition</li> <li>• The decision (upheld/not upheld)</li> <li>• Reasons for decisions made</li> <li>• Details of remedy offered</li> <li>• Action taken and any outstanding actions</li> <li>• Contact details of the Ombudsman and next steps to take should the individual remain dissatisfied.</li> </ul>	
<b>6.20</b>	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	<p>Individuals are informed within standard template letters that Stage 2 will be Brunelcare's final response and if the individuals remain dissatisfied they are advised to escalate to the Ombudsman.</p> <p>All suitable staff members will be involved within the Stage 2 investigation and response. The Complaints Officer works with Stage 2 investigators and prepares relevant briefing notes/advises on staff to be involved within the investigation.</p>	



			<p><b>Complaints Policy para 10.3:</b>  <i>The Complaints Officer will escalate the complaint to a more senior investigating officer.</i></p>	
<p><b>Section 7: Putting things right</b></p>				
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>Complaint outcome letters at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 outline the findings of a complaint investigation, whether a complaint was upheld, providing explanations and acknowledging where things have gone wrong, outlining actions taken or to be put in place and apologising, where appropriate.</p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 6.2:</b>  <i>Brunelcare will listen to every comment, concern or complaint and treat it in a serious and confidential manner. We will always communicate with the complainant providing reassurance that the complaint will be investigated thoroughly, resolved where possible and an apology will be issued if there has been a given cause for concern.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 9.6</b>  (detailed above)</p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 9.7:</b>  <i>In cases where a complaint has been upheld and there is a clear systemic issue, the appropriate Director should ensure that an</i></p>	

			<p><i>action plan is devised setting out how the recommendations will be implemented and identify who will be responsible for ensuring their implementation. When it affects them, frontline colleagues should be involved in this process. The plan should also include arrangements for confirming to the complainant that changes have been implemented and make provision for the monitoring and evaluation of new arrangements introduced to assess their impact.</i></p>	
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 9.8:</b>  <i>If formal legal action has been initiated by the complainant, the complaints procedure can continue if it is deemed appropriate and does not impact on the legal case. However if it is considered by the Company Secretary &amp; Head of Corporate Governance that the complaint investigation would prejudice the legal claim, the complaint should be stopped. If the complaints procedure ceases, the complainant and complained against must be advised in writing.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 9.9:</b>  <i>Financial compensation will be considered where we are unable to take action to redress an adverse impact on the customer caused by a service failure, or where the customer has incurred financial loss,</i></p>	

			<p><i>or where we are under a statutory or contractual obligation to compensate a customer. We may seek specialist advice regarding appropriate compensation levels from solicitors or the relevant Ombudsman service. In awarding compensation, we will consider whether any statutory payments are due, if any quantifiable losses have been incurred, the time and trouble a resident has been put to as well as any distress and inconvenience caused.</i></p> <p>Remedies offered are offered by the investigating officer based on the impact the individual. A separate Compensation Policy and Procedure are in place.</p>	
7.3	<p>The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate.</p> <p>Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.</p>	Yes	<p><b>Complaints Policy para 9.5:</b> <i>At the end of an investigation a written outcome should be set out in a formal letter and in more serious cases a report.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 9.6:</b> <i>Where a report is produced this should include where appropriate:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>the scope of the investigation</i></li> <li>● <i>a summary of the investigation, including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>details of key issues, setting out a brief chronology of events leading to</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>the complaint</i></li> <li>○ <i>those who were interviewed (including setting out to what degree the complainant, and if appropriate, any affected relatives, advocates, etc. were involved in the investigation)</i></li> <li>● <i>conclusion - if the complaint is found to be justified/upheld this should include details of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>what happened - i.e. what went wrong</i></li> <li>○ <i>why it happened – i.e. the root cause of the problem (e.g. human error, a systemic failure)</i></li> <li>○ <i>what impact did it have on the complainant if a systemic failure has been identified, an explanation of actions taken to put things right, with a view to ensuring the same problem does not occur again</i></li> <li>○ <i>if appropriate, an apology</i></li> <li>○ <i>if appropriate, an</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
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			<p style="text-align: center;"><i>offer of redress</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>If the complaint has not been upheld, there should be an explanation of why this conclusion has been reached, demonstrating that it has been arrived at based on the evidence gathered.</i></li> </ul>	
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	<p>Any remedies offered will take into account up to date and relevant guidance offered by the Ombudsman. Where relevant, the Complaints Officer and/or Complaint Lead will seek legal advice on matters regarding any legal entitlement to redress.</p> <p>See also <b>Complaints Policy para 9.8 and 9.9</b> (detailed above).</p>	
<b>Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance</b>				
8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.</li> <li>a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of</li> </ol>	Yes	<p>Brunelcare conducts and publishes an annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code and has done so since September 2020. Self-assessments are reviewed and approved by the Charity's Performance, Quality and Experience Committee prior to being ratified by the Board. Brunelcare's self assessment documents can be found on its website:  <a href="https://www.brunelcare.org.uk/conta">https://www.brunelcare.org.uk/conta</a></p>	

	<p>complaints the landlord has refused to accept;</p> <p>c) any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;</p> <p>d) the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;</p> <p>e) any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and</p> <p>f) any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.</p>		<p><a href="https://www.brunelcare.org.uk/about-us/make-a-complaint/">ct-us/make-a-complaint/</a></p> <p>Each year Brunelcare publishes an annual complaints report which covers a qualitative and quantitative analysis of complaints data and handling throughout this year. This report includes case studies, service improvements and learning made as a result of complaints made and any findings of non-compliance by the Ombudsman, where relevant: <a href="https://www.brunelcare.org.uk/about-us/our-performance/complaints-performance-reports/">https://www.brunelcare.org.uk/about-us/our-performance/complaints-performance-reports/</a> . Alongside an annual report, a quarterly performance report is also published on the same website page. Key messages and complaints data is published within the Charity's newsletter, Grapevine.</p> <p>Complaints reports are reviewed and approved by the Charity's Performance, Quality and Experience Committee prior to being ratified by the Board.</p>	
<b>8.2</b>	<p>The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the section of its website relating to complaints.</p> <p>The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.</p>	Yes	<p>Each year Brunelcare publishes an annual complaints report which covers a qualitative and quantitative analysis of complaints data and handling throughout this year. This report includes case studies, service improvements and learning made as a result of complaints made and any findings of non-compliance by the Ombudsman, where relevant:</p>	

			<p><a href="https://www.brunelcare.org.uk/about-us/our-performance/complaints-performance-reports/">https://www.brunelcare.org.uk/about-us/our-performance/complaints-performance-reports/</a> . Alongside an annual report, a quarterly performance report is also published on the same website page. Key messages and complaints data is published within the Charity's newsletter, Grapevine.</p> <p>Complaints reports are reviewed and approved by the Charity's Performance, Quality and Experience Committee prior to being ratified by the Board.</p> <p>Any responses by the Board are incorporated into the report prior to its publication, with additional responses published if appropriate.</p>	
<b>8.3</b>	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	A self-assessment will be carried out following a significant restructure and/or change in procedure.	
<b>8.4</b>	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	The Charity's self-assessment will be reviewed and updated following any request by the Ombudsman to do so as a result of an investigation.	
<b>8.5</b>	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	Yes	Appropriate steps will be taken and customers advised should the Charity be unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances. This will be published on the Charity's website	

	timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.		alongside a timescale for compliance.	
<b>Section 9: Scrutiny &amp; oversight: continuous learning and improvement</b>				
<b>9.1</b>	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><b>Complaints Policy para 5.1</b>  <i>Key Principles:</i>  <i>Seeking continuous improvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Using the feedback and the lessons learnt from complaints to improve service design and delivery.</i></li> <li>● <i>Having systems in place to record, analyse and report on the learning from complaints.</i></li> <li>● <i>Regularly reviewing the lessons learnt from complaints.</i></li> <li>● <i>Telling the complainant about the lessons learnt and changes made to services, guidance or policy.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 12.1:</b>  <i>Brunelcare will use any comments, concerns, complaints and compliments received to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>identify what is working well through compliment trends – share good practice.</i></li> <li>● <i>help identify potential service problems through trends in concerns raised – early warning system.</i></li> <li>● <i>highlight potential system failure and or human error – identify need for</i></li> </ul>	



		<p><i>improvement.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>provide the information required to review services and procedures effectively - respond to requests for customer experience data for service reviews/evaluations.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 12.2:</b> <i>Brunelcare records whether or not the complaint has been upheld, partially or in full, so that learning can be focused on where there have been service failures of any kind.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 12.3:</b> <i>Following the closure of a complaint root causes and actions arising as a result of the complaint will be reported within the directorate responsible for ensuring that actions are completed through their quarterly governance reviews.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 12.4:</b> <i>A survey will be sent to each complainant once their file is closed to ask questions about their experience of how their recent complaint was handled by Brunelcare.</i></p> <p>The Complaints Officer holds lessons learned meetings with key individuals and service managers to understand lessons learned and how learning can be embedded</p>	
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			across the Charity. These are scheduled in advance with action logs covering actions to be undertaken and embedded.	
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><b>Complaints Policy para 6.1</b>  <i>Brunelcare takes the approach that concerns and complaints raised are gifts and an opportunity to improve our services. Without feedback from our customers we have fewer opportunities to develop as an organisation and as individuals.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 6.2:</b>  <i>Brunelcare will listen to every comment, concern or complaint and treat it in a serious and confidential manner. We will always communicate with the complainant providing reassurance that the complaint will be investigated thoroughly, resolved where possible and an apology will be issued if there has been a given cause for concern.</i></p> <p><b>Complaints Policy para 6.3:</b>  <i>The Charity has a learning culture and a strong commitment to putting things right when a need for improvement has been identified. This is done by acknowledging any mistakes and assessing the need for change whether that be a review of any relevant procedures or addressing training requirements for</i></p>	

			<p><i>employees that have been identified as part of the complaints process.</i></p> <p>The Complaints Officer holds lessons learned meetings with key individuals and service managers to understand lessons learned and how learning can be embedded across the Charity. These are scheduled in advance with action logs covering actions to be undertaken and embedded.</p>	
9.3	<p>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.</p>		<p>See <b>Complaints Policy Section 6</b> (detailed above).</p> <p>Learning and improvements are reported to stakeholders through site meetings, the Charity's Annual Report, Complaints Annual Report and through the Charity's newsletter, Grapevine.</p>	
9.4	<p>Landlords <b>must</b> appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling.</p> <p>This person <b>must</b> assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.</p>	Yes	<p>See <b>Complaints Policy Section 15</b>. This confirms that Brunelcare has appointed a Trustee Complaints Lead and that the CEO has overall responsibility for the complaints process and for ensuring compliance with current regulation. The Company Secretary and Director of Corporate Governance, is responsible for day-to-day complaints handling and the implementation of the Charity's Complaints Policy.</p>	

			Quarterly and annual complaints reports are presented to, and discussed by, the Charity's Performance, Quality and Experience Committee and Board. This includes the identification of systemic issues, risks, trends and actions taken.	
<b>9.5</b>	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	A Trustee member of the Board has been designated the lead for Complaints. The lead reviews all quarterly reports before they go to the Performance, Quality and Experience Committee and the annual report, providing comments and support. Where a complainant is not happy with a complaint response following Stage 2 the lead reviews all documentary evidence to ensure that a full investigation has been completed and the response provided at Stage 2 reasonable, where appropriate. This role is described in Section 15.4 of the policy.	
<b>9.6</b>	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	The lead reviews all quarterly reports before they go to the Performance, Quality and Experience Committee and the annual report, providing comments and support. Quarterly and annual complaints reports are presented to, and discussed by, the Charity's Performance, Quality and Experience Committee and Board. This includes the identification of	

			systemic issues, risks, trends and actions taken.	
<b>9.7</b>	<p>As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;</li> <li>b) regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;</li> <li>c) regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and</li> <li>d) annual complaints performance and service improvement report.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>The lead reviews all quarterly reports before they go to the Performance, Quality and Experience Committee and the annual report, providing comments and support. Quarterly and annual complaints reports are presented to, and discussed by, the Charity's Performance, Quality and Experience Committee and Board. This includes the identification of systemic issues, risks, trends and actions taken.</p>	
<b>9.8</b>	<p>Landlords <b>must</b> have a standard 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"> <li>a) have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</li> <li>b) take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and</li> <li>c) act within the professional standards for engaging with</li> </ul>		<p><b>Complaints Policy Section 5</b> sets out key principles and requirements. The principles are set out under the headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Getting it right</li> <li>● Being customer focused</li> <li>● Acting fairly and proportionately</li> <li>● Putting things right</li> <li>● Seeking continuous improvement</li> </ul> <p>See also <b>Complaints Policy Section 15</b>.</p>	

	complaints as set by any relevant professional body.			
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