**Item 10 Appendix 1**

**Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code:**

**Self-assessment form January 2021**

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| **Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code** | | | |
| **1** | **Definition of a complaint** | **Yes** | **No** |
|  | Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint?  *An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents*. | **X** |  |
|  | Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered? | **X** |  |
|  | Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?  Evidence relied upon:   * Our new policy has been written in line with the code, specifically 1.5 from the code, and 5.1 from our policy. | **X** |  |
| **2** | **Accessibility** |  |  |
|  | Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint? | **X** |  |
|  | Is the complaints policy and procedure available online? | **X** |  |
|  | Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy? | **X** |  |
|  | Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process? | **X** |  |
| **3** | **Complaints team and process** |  |  |
|  | Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post? | **X** |  |
|  | Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints? | **X** |  |
|  | Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes? | **X** |  |
|  | If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making? | **N/A** |  |
|  | Is any third stage optional for residents? | **N/A** |  |
|  | Does the final stage response set out residents’ right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service? | **X** |  |
|  | Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident? | **X** |  |
|  | At what stage are most complaints resolved?  We work with all our residents to try to resolve complaints through our informal process and the majority of these are resolved at this point. In our formal complaints process most complaints are resolved through Stage 1. |  |  |
| **4** | **Communication** |  |  |
|  | Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?  **See additional information at point 5 below.** | **X** |  |
|  | Are residents informed of the landlord’s position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision? | **X** |  |
|  | Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days? | **X** |  |
|  | Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage? | **X** |  |
|  | What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?  Looking at all our complaints we resolve   * + 64% at our EOD stage,   + 34% of complaints are resolved at Stage 1   + The remaining 2% are resolved at Stage 2 |  |  |
|  | What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?   * + 2% including EODs in the overall number of complaints |  |  |
|  | What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?   * Stage one:   32% (48)   * Stage one (with extension):   4% (6) had a holding letter sent and responses were sent 0, 4, 13, 21, 28 and 57 days later   * Stage two:   57% (4)   * Stage two (with extension):   No stage 2’s had a holding letter sent |  |  |
|  | Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?  Of the 6 cases we have on record as having holding letters sent, 4 had documented good reasons why. |  |  |
|  | Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?  Of the 6 cases we have on record as having holding letters sent, only 1 indicates that the resident was kept updated in-between. |  |  |
|  | What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents’ satisfaction?   * Satisfaction with the way the complaint was handled – 18% * Satisfaction with the final outcome – 20% * Satisfaction with being kept informed – 16% |  |  |
| **5** | **Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service** |  |  |
|  | Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?  65% of all cases were responded to within the timescale.  These are dealt with directly by the internal Complaints Team and the new Customer Resolution Manager has been tasked to ensure that internal controls are in place to ensure that we meet this target in future.  **Our process and policy instructs staff to ensure that residents are kept informed throughout the period of their complaint and the Complaints Team are responsible for ensuring the Housing Ombudsman is kept informed. Through a recent case highlighted to Origin by the Housing Ombudsman in December 2019 in this particular case we did not comply with this. New Training is being planned for staff commencing the week 25 January 2021 and this will be highlighted through the process. This would have resulted in Origin being issued with a Complaint Handling Failure Order and in turn this would have been shared with the Housing Regulator.** |  | **X** |
|  | Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?  We have not in the past kept the Ombudsman informed of any delays to respond. The new Customer Resolution Manager will be reviewing our process on this.  Previous actions had also been put in place were all correspondence to the Ombudsman is reviewed and sent from the Head of Service. |  | **X** |
| **6** | **Fairness in complaint handling** |  |  |
|  | Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout? | **X** |  |
|  | If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand? | **X** |  |
|  | How many cases did we refuse to escalate?  During the financial year 19/20 we have not recorded refusals to escalate through our CRM system.  We recognise that this is a key area to report and will be making changes to our internal process to collect this information in the future.  What was the reason for the refusal? |  |  |
|  | Did we explain our decision to the resident?  Within our procedure we clearly state that full communication of our decision must be made with the resident. | **X** |  |
| **7** | **Outcomes and remedies** |  |  |
|  | Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right? | **X** |  |
| **8** | **Continuous learning and improvement** |  |  |
|  | What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?   * We have introduced a team of Estate Inspectors to work proactively in managing communal repairs and common areas. * We established a team of surveyors to work with our residents on complex repairs. * We introduced the roles of Resident Liaison Officers within our repairs team and compliance team to ensure that residents are kept informed of works in their properties and local area. * To build on communication with our residents we have introduced a facility “group comms” enabling us to keep groups of resident informed at all times. * We have reviewed a number of processes as a result of upheld complaints including how we manage Anti Social Behaviour, daily monitoring of outstanding repairs and working with our contractor on a cases in jeopardy. * We have introduced a CRM system to monitor all contacts with Origin. This enables transparency on all complaints as well as general contacts and there is a programme to enhance this further across the business. * We have introduced a specialist Home Ownership Team working with all our Home Owners. * We carried out a review of the service charge process, implemented a number of changes including enhancing the information provided and rolled out in April 20 which led to a significant reduction in queries. * We have introduced a new repairs offer for quicker repair resolution, offering same day repairs. * We are conducting a resident led scrutiny review of one of our policies as a result of a complaint. * Developed new channels for communication with residents including a new resident portal, WhatsApp, Chatbot, virtual meetings with Neighbourhood Managers, Income Managers and Home Ownership Team. These are actively managed. * Enhanced our lettings process including the provision of helpful videos for all our new developments on things you need to know ranging from how to work your heating through to local amenities. * With changes in how we are currently able to connect with our residents and understanding from complaints the importance of keeping connected and communicating we have introduced Executive Q+A opportunities allowing us to answer common queries raised by residents but in addition we respond to each individual query. * A pilot IOT initiatives is currently underway to shift our focus from reactive to preventative measures. |  |  |
|  | How do we share these lessons with:   1. residents? Through our website, through our spotlight group. 2. the board/governing body? Quarterly reports to the Customer Services Committee and Board outlining lessons learnt. 3. In the Annual Report? Information is provided in our annual reports. |  |  |
|  | Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints? | **X** |  |
|  | What changes have we made?   * Reviewed our policy and procedure, reducing our stages from 3 to 2 and added more points of contact with the resident throughout the process. * Reviewed our compensation policy * Planned in to review our Vulnerability Policy. * To complete a new Reasonable Adjustments Policy by Dec 2020. . |  |  |