

Appendix A: Self-assessment form

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and it must be reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body at least annually.

Once approved, landlords must publish the self-assessment as part of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report on their website. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.

Landlords are required to complete the self-assessment in full and support all statements with evidence, with additional commentary as necessary.

We recognise that there may be a small number of circumstances where landlords are unable to meet the requirements, for example, if they do not have a website. In these circumstances, we expect landlords to deliver the intentions of the Code in an alternative way, for example by publishing information in a public area so that it is easily accessible.

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	<p>A complaint must be defined as:</p> <p><i>‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.’</i></p>	Yes	<p>https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy</p> <p>https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/</p>	<p>CBMDC has a housing stock of 429 properties. We have entered into contracts with two Registered Providers of social housing who are providing property management, repairs maintenance of our properties in the District.</p> <p>Throughout the term of these contracts, the Council retains ownership of the properties and our commissioned contractors will act as managing agents.</p> <p>Therefore, residents living in our properties are advised to contact the respective management agents to provide any feedback or raise service requests. As Registered Providers, our management agents follow the Housing Ombudsman guidance when handling, managing and reporting on complaint performance and service</p>

				<p>requests received from tenants of CBMDC owned homes.</p> <p>Residents are entitled to receive services delivered by our contracted Management Agents and where appropriate the Council will signpost tenants to enable them to access the complaints process.</p>
1.3	<p>A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.</p>	Yes	<p>https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy</p> <p>https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/</p>	<p>Our Management Agents are aware of this.</p>
1.4	<p>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</p>	Yes	<p>https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy</p> <p>https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/</p>	<p>Our Management Agents are aware of this.</p>

	requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests 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	www.mearsgroup.co.uk www.incommunities.co.uk	Our Management Agents work to the requirements of the code.
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.	Yes	www.mearsgroup.co.uk www.incommunities.co.uk	Our Management Agents will endeavour to respond to resolve the issue and escalate to a complaint if our resident wishes to do so. Appropriate signposting is given when concerns are raised when completing feedback surveys.

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	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	Our contracted management agents are expected to set out the reasons for when they refuse to accept a complaint. Each complaint will be considered on its own merits. If a complaint cannot be accepted, our agents will clearly set out the reasons why.
2.2	<p>A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. • Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form 	Yes	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	We expect our contracted management agents to clearly sets out when they will not consider a complaint.

	<p>and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy. 			
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. 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>https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy</p> <p>https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/</p>	<p>We expect our contracted management agents to accept complaints outside the time limit when there are good reasons to do so, the case is considered on its own merits.</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. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.</p>	Yes	<p>https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy</p> <p>https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/</p>	<p>We expect our contracted management agents to outline the scope & limitations in their complaint policies, providing reasons why a complaint may not be accepted.</p> <p>The management agents operate fairly and reasonably and make allowances where</p>

				appropriate. As Registered Providers, our agents are expected to work closely with the Ombudsman and support the decision/direction that is provided.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	Our management agents will consider the individuals circumstances for each complaint made and will not take a blanket approach to exclusions.

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	Yes	www.mearsgroup.co.uk www.incommunities.co.uk	Both Mears & Incommunities have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure access to reasonable adjustments are provided. Our managing agents' annual Housing Ombudsman self-assessment form will reflect how they adhere to the

	may need to access the complaints process.			Equality Act 2010 when handling complaints from tenants who live in CBMDC properties.
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.		https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	The Council expects our management agents to accept complaints to any member of staff. We expect our commissioned agents to train their staff to ensure they are aware of procedures when accepting a complaint.
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	We expect our property management agents to ensure they have a) an understanding of the Housing Ombudsman's complaints code and guidance and b) to reflect this in their annual Housing Ombudsman self-assessment form	In line with our ongoing improvements of complaint handling, we planning to engage further with our management agents to ensure that they are complying with the Ombudsman requirements and also in line with CBMDC's culture of handling complaints.
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the	Yes	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	We expect our management agents to ensure their complaints policies are accessible for all residents.

	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.			As Registered Providers this should be reflected in their annual Housing Ombudsman self-assessment form.
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	We expect our property management agents to ensure they have a) an understanding of the Housing Ombudsman's complaints code and guidance and b) to reflect this in their annual Housing Ombudsman self-assessment form	We expect our contracted management agents' complaints policies to provide details of the complaints process and where it will be published. The complaints policies should also include details about the Ombudsman Service and the Code. CBMDC. We will continue to liaise with our management agents if any amendments to policies are required.
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	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	We expect our property management agents to provide information inline with the Ombudsman's guidance about representation when making a complaint. This should be reflected in our management agents' annual Housing

				Ombudsman self-assessment form and their complaints policy.
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	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	We expect our management agents to provide information about a tenant's right to access the Housing Ombudsman even if they have an open complaint with our agents.

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	Our commissioned management agents are established Registered Providers with their own complaint teams. CBMDC has contracted the agents to lead on complaints on behalf of the Council	..
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	CBMDC expects our contracted agents to ensure their complaints officers have access to staff through out their organisations so that a prompt complaint resolution can be reached	..
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	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on	We expect our agents to ensure they have on going complaint handling training in place for all staff (including new starters) and provide bespoke training for staff where needed.

			properties they manage on behalf of the Council	CBMDC will work closely with our contracted agents to discuss any issues that arise when handling complaints about Council own properties
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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	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	All complaints covered by this code fall under our agents' Housing Complaint 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	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	We expect our agents to follow the code of guidance on complaints without introducing additional and unnecessary stages.
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any	Yes		Our contracted agents operate a two stage

	circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.		https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	complaints process with no additional named stages.
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	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	We will continue to work with our agents to ensure a two stage complaints process is followed, and where residents are expected to go through one complaints procedure.
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	Any complaint response that is handled by a third party remains under the scope of our agents' complaints policy and therefore in line with the Ombudsman Code of practice.
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	Yes	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	We expect our agents to provide formal complaint acknowledgement letters that include details of the

	refer to this as “the complaint definition”. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.			complaint as well as the outcomes/remedies that the resident is seeking. In any cases where further clarity is required, staff are advised to contact the resident for further clarification.
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	If an aspect of the formal complaint that cannot be investigated via the Housing Complaints Policy, the complainant is expected to be informed. Wherever possible, residents will be signposted to the correct body.
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully. 	Yes	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	We expect our contracted agents to follow the Ombudsman code for handling complaints, to carry out complaints impartially, carry out an objective review of the complaint, should there be any conflict of interest we expect our contracted agents to ensure that an

				appropriate complaints person is allocated to the case. Our agents have a Quality Assurance process in place and are Registered Providers.
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	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	We expect our agents to keep to complaint response timescales and provide an update at suitable intervals to the complainant.
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	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	We will ensure any resident/complainant reasonable adjustments are considered through our agents' complaint handling process.
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		We expect any refusal to escalate a complaint adheres to the agents' complaints process and policy. If a complainant is deemed as vexatious,	..

	must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.		we expect the agents to provide an explanation to the complainant.	
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	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	Our contracted agents use their own dedicated management information system for logging, monitoring and managing all complaints received and responded to.
5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.	Yes	Agents have processes in place to reach a quick resolve and in some cases seek to remedy complaints at the earliest available opportunity. If it becomes clear that a remedy is readily available to resolve a complaint this should be actioned even if the complaint process continues.	..
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	Yes	If it becomes necessary to put restrictions in place, CBMDC expects our contracted agents to reference their own Managing Vexatious	..

	place and must keep restrictions under regular review.		Complaints Policy and apply their process appropriately	
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		CBMDC expects our agents to take proportionate action and always be taken in line with the Equality Act 2010.

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	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	<p>We expect our agents to aim to resolve all complaints at stage 1 without requesting an extension, having due regard to the complexity of the case and resident vulnerability or risk.</p> <p>We expect response dates tracked to ensure formal responses are completed in as timely a manner as possible. We expect the agents to actively encourage colleagues to respond to and resolve complaints as soon as practicably possible.</p> <p>We plan to engage further with our contracted agents to satisfy ourselves that the appropriate in</p>

				complaints training is in place.
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u>	Yes	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	Timescales should be set out in the Managing agent's Housing Complaints Policy.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	CBMDC expects our agents to ensure they complaint to the timeframes that should be set out in their complaint policies
6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	We expect our agents to comply with the Ombudsman's guidance
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided	Yes	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints	If a complaint requires an extension, the Housing

	with the contact details of the Ombudsman.		including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	Ombudsman details will be provided at all stages. All response letters to complainants also include details with how a resident can contact the Housing Ombudsman.
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.		Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	We expect our contracted agents to send a complaint response to the resident when the answer to complaint is known. Agents should have a process in place to track and monitor completion of promised actions
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	We expect our contracted agents to provide complaint responses at a good standard, including clear findings, outcomes and actions, referencing all relevant policies and regulations where appropriate

6.8	<p>Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response 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>Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council</p>	<p>CBMDC expects our agents to have a process in place when additional complaints are raised by the complaints. We expect our agents to consider whether additional issues need to be added to the complaint or if a secondary complaint should be raised</p>
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"> a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response. 	Yes	<p>Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council</p>	<p>We expect our agents to have standard template letter and stage 1 guidance to provide structure to complaint responses</p>

Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/good-governance/mears-group-complaints-policy https://www.incommunities.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback/	We expect our contracted agents to appropriately signpost in the Stage 1 letters and advise complainants on how to escalate their complaints to stage 2 complaint.
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	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	We expect the timescales to be adhered to.
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	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	CBMDC does not expect residents to provide reasoning for their request of an escalation to stage 2. If required, it is accepted that the agents will seek additional information as to why the resident was not satisfied with the stage 1 response. However, this is not a

				prerequisite of a stage 2 consideration.
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	Our Agents are expected to follow a process to ensure that the stage 2 complaint is responded to by a different person at stage 1
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	We expect our contracted agents to include response timeframes at stage 2 in their complaint policy.
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	We expect our agents to update complainants at Stage 2 complaints if an extension is required, this should include reasoning for the extension.

6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	CBMDC expects our contracted agents to ensure timescales are provided to the complainants when extensions are required and that they provide the Housing Ombudsman's details in their correspondence
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	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	The complaint response is sent to the complainant when the answer to complaint is known. If there should be any outstanding actions, CBMDC expect our agents to outline outstanding actions in the complaint response, so they are clearly communicated.
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant	Yes	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The	Our agents are expected to address all points raised in their complaints

	policy, law and good practice where appropriate.		information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	responses and also provide clear reasons for the decisions made.
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"> a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied. 	Yes	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	As a part of handling complaints from tenants who reside in Council owned properties, our Agents use their own template letters. We expect our agents to ensure that they comply with the Ombudsman's guidance when writing a stage 2 complaint response.
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	Allocated Stage 2 investigation Officers will consult with all appropriate staff

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Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	<p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologising; • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; • Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons; • Taking action if there has been delay; • Reconsidering or changing a decision; • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • Providing a financial remedy; • Changing policies, procedures or practices. 	Yes	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	<p>Our contracted agents are expected to comply to Ombudsman's guidance when errors or maladministration has been identified. Where fault is found it should be acknowledged and an apology should be provided, rectification should be completed as soon as possible.</p> <p>A financial remedy should be considered in line with the Ombudsman's guidance.</p> <p>Learning from complaints is important to CBMDC, any learning should be shared with relevant service areas.</p>
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of	We encourage our agents to ensure the remedies

			complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	offered reflect the impact on the resident.
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.		Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	<p>In line with the Council's complaints practice under the guidance of LGSCO, we expect our agents to provide response letters which clearly set out what actions will be taken as part of the remedy, Wherever known, agents should include the timescales of said actions.</p> <p>In cases where appropriate outstanding actions, appointments, repairs are to be made as an outcome of a complaint, the agents are expected to arrive at an agreement with the resident.</p> <p>All remedies should be processed through to completion and noted on the case file.</p>

7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	CBMDC is committed to handling complaints in the best possible manner. We expect our contracted agents to refer to the Ombudsman's guidance when deciding upon remedies for our complaint cases.
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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"> a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept; c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman; d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord. 	Yes	<p>The self-assessment against this code is published on our website Self Assessment Form (bradford.gov.uk)</p> <p>Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council</p>	<p>Further to an ongoing review of the Council's Housing Team, the Team will collaborate with the Corporate Complaints Team when producing annual complaints performance and service improvement to the Council's Governance and Audit Committee to ensure that we report on Housing Complaints.</p> <p>The report will include the annual self-assessment. The Council will ensure that our contracted agents' Housing Complaints policy remains in line with its requirements and the Code.</p> <p>Whilst we recognise that our agents have their own reporting and governance in place, we acknowledge that further work needs to be put in place for 2024/2025 to ensure that CBMDC holds a</p>

				robust mechanism in place, including any learning from the previous year's housing complaints and service improvements. It will include findings of non-compliance and investigations carried out by the Housing Ombudsman.
8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	We will continue to work closely with our contracted agents to ensure that reports are signposted on our website and where appropriate, we will look to provide a council response.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes		The Council is currently undergoing a restructure of the Housing Management Team and it will impact changes in procedure. We commit to a review of this self-assessment following a restructure or changes in procedures.

8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes		We commit to carrying out a review and update of our self-assessment should we be requested to do so by the Housing Ombudsman Service. There is an expectation that our managing agents comply with this also.
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	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	If our contracted managing agents are unable to comply with the code due to exceptional circumstances, we expect them to inform the Housing Ombudsman Service and provide information to our customers/tenants with timescales for returning to compliance.

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	The Council is committed to learning from complaints and looking beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint. We hold regular review of the housing complaints we have received to identify service failures and use this learning to consider whether service improvements need to be made as a result. Going forward, CBMDC plans to engage with our contracted management agents to ensure lessons learned are fed into the Council's learnings.
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	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects	Recommendations and learning from individual complaints as well as trends are important to the Council and we recognise that further work is required with

			information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	our contracted property management agents to ensure that their handling of housing complaints are fed back to the Council.
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.	Partial	Housing Complaints Policy (reference which section)	Due to the low volume of housing stock owned by the Council, we do not currently report back on wider learning from housing complaints through panels. The Housing Service will review this aspect and consider the best way to approach this.
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	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	The Housing Services Manager has accountability for Housing complaints within the Council. In conjunction with the Corporate Complaints Team Manager, this role also assesses any themes or trends to identify potential issues. This process is undergoing a review as a part of a wide Housing Service review.

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	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	We are looking to integrate into Council's Governance Audit Committee Report where all complaints reports are taken. In addition, reports will be taken to the Portfolio holder responsible for Housing.
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	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	We are looking to integrate into Council's Governance Audit Committee Report where all complaints reports are taken. In addition, reports will be taken to the Portfolio holder responsible for Housing.
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;	Yes	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	We are looking to integrate into Council's Governance Audit Committee Report where all complaints reports are taken. In addition, reports will be taken to the Portfolio holder responsible for Housing.

	<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>			
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	Incommunities & Mears submit annual self-assessment forms which cover the handling of complaints including Council owned properties. The information in their submissions also reflects information on properties they manage on behalf of the Council	CDMDC works collaboratively with our contacted agents. We take responsibility for failures as a collective, rather than promoting a blame culture. This is also an expectation of our contracted management agents. Our agents are committed to acting within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set out by the Ombudsman.