

Appendix A: Self-assessment form

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

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

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

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

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <i>‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.’</i>	Yes	This policy is available on our website on our website – Complaints and Feedback Policy Our Complaints and Feedback Policy was recently reviewed by the Housing Ombudsman (HO), who identified 25 recommended changes to the policy. These have been incorporated into the policy, and a communication strategy was implemented to ensure officers adhere to the updated requirements.	Stroud District Council have a corporate Complaints and Feedback Policy, which covers complaints by both the LGSCO and the HO. In this policy, we define a complaint as: ‘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 or group of individuals.’
1.3	A resident does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or	Yes	The Council’s Complaints and Feedback Policy includes a section on “Using support to make a complaint or give feedback”. It advises that residents may ask a third party or representative to help them provided the resident’s explicit	We will try to resolve all expressions of dissatisfaction straight away, where possible, unless this is clearly a complaint and if so, this will be registered as a

	representative must be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.		consent is given for them to support the resident with their enquiry.	complaint and logged for investigation.
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.	Yes	Service requests are monitored and reviewed in the same way that our complaints are and are responded to directly by the relevant service team.	Our Complaints and Feedback Policy explains that where a resident makes a request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision without an expression of dissatisfaction, the matter will be managed as a service request.
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	Refer to our Complaints and Feedback Policy	Our Complaints and Feedback Policy explains that if a resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to a service request, this will be managed as a complaint. We recognise this as a complaint regardless of whether the underlying service request is still in progress. We will continue to actively progress and resolve the original service request

				alongside the complaint investigation.
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	Our surveys contain a closing statement that reads: “Thank you for taking the time to answer this survey, your feedback is important to us. As part of our continuing effort to improve our services to you, we rely on feedback from our community. We will analyse survey responses to help us understand how our repairs/lettings/ASB service is performing and where we can improve based on your feedback. We want to know when we get it right so that standards can be maintained or improved, but we also want to know when things don’t go well, so we can learn, improve and develop the services we provide to you. If you wish to leave a compliment or pursue a complaint about the service, please visit our website: https://www.stroud.gov.uk/complaints”	All of the surveys we produce have a statement on them advising of how residents can pursue a complaint should they wish to do so. The Council hosts resident engagement events, during which residents are provided with details on how they can give feedback, including making complaints and giving compliments.

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	During 2025-26, 19 cases were assessed and not accepted as complaints as they did not meet the definition of a complaint under the Complaint Handling Code, in that no expression of dissatisfaction was identified. These cases were therefore managed as service requests in line with our standard service delivery procedures.	Our Complaints and Feedback Policy explains that each complaint will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and where we decide not to accept a complaint, we will inform the resident of their right to refer the decision to the relevant Ombudsman.
2.2	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: • 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 and	Yes	Refer to our Complaints and Feedback Policy	Our Complaints and Feedback Policy explains that in line with the Ombudsman code, we will not generally accept complaints where: • More than 12 months has elapsed since the resident was first made aware of the issue or the issue occurred • Legal proceedings have started, and details of the claim have been filed at court.

	Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court. • Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.			• Matters have previously been considered under both stages of the complaints policy However, each complaint will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. What we can deal with, and what our exceptions are, are outlined in this policy.
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	Yes	Refer to our Complaints and Feedback Policy	All complaints are accepted unless the matter being raised is not covered under the Council's Complaints and Feedback Policy. We ask residents that they submit their complaint as soon as possible, as it is unlikely that we will accept complaints that are over 12 months old, although we will assess this on a case-by-case basis.
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right	Yes	During 2025-26, we did not refuse any complaints that met the definition of a complaint in line with the Complaint Handling Code.	If the resident's dissatisfaction falls outside of our Complaints Policy, or if it is not valid, we will write to them giving them a

	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.		However, 19 cases were assessed and not accepted as complaints as they did not meet the definition of a complaint under the Complaint Handling Code, as no expression of dissatisfaction was identified. These cases were managed as service requests. See Section 2.1.	detailed explanation as to why such a decision was made and what their options are.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Our Complaints and Feedback Policy explains that when a complaint is raised, we will explain our understanding of the complaint, what is expected as an outcome, and explain if there are any aspects which we are not responsible for investigating.	We will ensure each complaint is dealt with on its own merits and reviewed in an impartial manner.

Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	During 2025-26, complaints submitted via email direct to Housing Services is the most popular way that residents contact us, followed by complaints submitted online. These two communication channels make up 94% of the way customers contact us about complaints: Email: 133 Online: 98 Letter: 25 Phone: 9	Complaints can be made through any of our contact channels: • On-line • Email • Phone • Post • Text • Face to Face • Social Media Our Complaints and Feedback Policy includes a section on Equality Monitoring, as part of ensuring that we are providing an equitable service to all of our customers. We may ask if the enquiry is related to any of the protected equality characteristics. Providing this information is voluntary, but we encourage this as it helps us assess if we are

				reaching all of our residents, that our services are appropriate for everyone's needs, and that any shortfalls are investigated and resolved. If a resident does not have access to the internet, we will print and send a copy of the Complaints and Feedback Policy to them. Stroud District Council also works in partnership with an external company (Prime Production Ltd) who offer an interpretation and translation services, including BSL.
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	All of our complaint case files and monitoring logs are kept and shared on our system, which all complaint handlers have access to. A note is placed on our Housing Management System once a complaint is received and registered, so that all staff are aware.	Residents are able to raise their complaints through a range of contact channels and directly with any member of staff. All staff are aware of the complaints process and what they should do if they receive a complaint.

			All staff involved in complaints have access to the council's complaints management system, which allows us to track and process incoming complaints placed via our website All complaint handlers are given training on our complaints process and are sent links to documents and websites that will assist them in their case handling. Refresher training was delivered to all complaint handlers on 21 and 30 April 2026, with new tools and guidance materials introduced to support compliance with the Complaint Handling Code and promote best practice. Information and guidance on our Complaints and Feedback Policy is being incorporated into a new induction pack for all incoming staff, which is currently under development.	Team meetings have a standard agenda item of complaints on them, and learning outcomes are discussed as part of ongoing service improvements. We monitor the Housing Ombudsman's website and circulate details of any opportunities for attending training/webinars/e-learning to our complaint handlers.
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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	TSM results for 2025-26 show that per 1,000 properties, Stroud District Council received 37.17 Stage 1 complaints, which is between the average and lower quartile for organisations of a similar size.	We actively promote a positive complaint handling culture, where staff are encouraged to make residents aware of the complaints process where a service failure has occurred. We welcome feedback from residents and use this to inform learning, drive service improvements, and shape the future delivery of our services.
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.	Yes	Our website includes a range of accessibility features to support a wide range of user needs. These tools enable customers to customise their experience, including options to convert text to speech, adjust text size and font, change colour themes and focus or simplify content. Additional functionality includes translation into over 130 languages, cursor and screen customisation, reading aids such as rulers and screen masks, and options to pause animations, hide images, or access image descriptions and plain text mode.	See Section 3.1. Our Complaints and Feedback Policy clearly sets out how residents can provide feedback and how this is managed by the organisation. It includes detailed information on both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of our complaints process, including the relevant timescales for responses. The policy also provides clear guidance on how

			Users can also view page structure, access an integrated dictionary, download audio, and utilise the 'Recite Me' accessibility support tool.	residents can contact the appropriate Ombudsman.
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	Refer to our Complaints and Feedback Policy	Our Complaints and Feedback Policy confirms that we operate in line with both the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Codes, and provides direct links to each. The policy also includes clear information on how residents can contact the relevant Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied.
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	Refer to our Complaints and Feedback Policy	Our Complaints and Feedback Policy includes a section on "Using support to make a complaint or give feedback". This advises that residents may nominate a third party or representative to act on their behalf, provided that the resident's

				explicit consent is obtained to allow them to support with the enquiry.
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	Our Complaints and Feedback Policy includes a dedicated section on “Ombudsman Services”. This provides residents with clear information on how to contact the relevant Ombudsman, particularly at Stage 2 of the complaints process. Full contact details for each Ombudsman are also set out within the policy.	Complainants are informed of their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service at any stage of the complaints process. This is clearly communicated within both our Stage 1 and Stage 2 response templates.

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	Nothing to provide	Housing Services are supported by a dedicated Housing Quality Assurance (HQA) Team, which is responsible for overseeing and managing the complaints handling process, including liaison with the Ombudsman. Quarterly and annual performance reports are produced and shared with the Senior Management Team and Performance Members to support oversight and assurance. In addition, the HQA Team issues a weekly Complaint Status Update to complaint handlers. This provides reminders to review and update complaint statuses and supports the timely progression and response to complaints.

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	Nothing to provide	Housing Services have a number of dedicated complaint handlers who are responsible for investigating and responding to complaints at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the complaints process. The Housing Quality Assurance (HQA) Team has the authority and independence to act to resolve disputes and will escalate any concerns to senior management for consideration and action where appropriate.
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	We have recently delivered refresher training to all complaint handlers, with a specific focus on identifying learning outcomes and service improvements arising from complaints. Following this, we have updated our Stage 1 response letter template to include a dedicated section that clearly sets out the learning identified and any	Complaint handlers are required to undertake regular training in relation to handling complaints, and any changes to the Complaint Handling Code or our policies are communicated. Complaints and learning outcomes are regularly discussed at team meetings

			service improvements resulting from the complaint. Our Complaints Review Group plays a key role in providing oversight, assurance, and organisational learning. Its key functions include reviewing a sample of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints to assess compliance with the Complaint Handling Code, identifying themes, trends, or risks relating to non-compliance, and ensuring that learning outcomes and service improvements are clearly identified, recorded, tracked, and implemented.	and at the Complaints Review Group.
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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	Corporate Care Standards V5	Stroud District Council operates a single Complaints and Feedback Policy which clearly sets out how residents can provide feedback and how this is managed by the Council. The policy explains what residents can expect when raising a complaint and is supported by our corporate Service Standards, which set clear expectations for service delivery.
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	Nothing to provide	We support the early and local resolution of issues wherever possible and aim to resolve concerns at the first point of contact through our normal service delivery processes. This approach helps address issues quickly and reduces the need for formal escalation.

				Where a resident expresses dissatisfaction, this is promptly recognised and managed through our formal two-stage complaints process in line with the Complaint Handling Code. We do not operate any additional or informal complaint stages (such as a 'stage 0'), ensuring clarity, consistency, and transparency for residents about how their complaint will be handled.
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	Our complaints policy does not have more than 2 stages.	Where a resident contacts us and the issue cannot be confidently resolved through normal service delivery, or where the matter meets the definition of a complaint, we will register the issue as a complaint and commence an investigation under our Stage 1 complaints process. If, following the Stage 1 response, the resident remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they can request escalation to Stage 2.

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	Refer to our Complaints and Feedback Policy	Residents will progress through a single, clearly defined complaints process. Stage 1 complaints are investigated and responded to by officers within Housing Services and are not handled by a third party. Stage 2 complaints are subject to a peer review and are considered by a manager from a different service area to the one that handled the Stage 1 complaint. This approach provides independence, fairness, and appropriate scrutiny, ensuring an impartial review by someone not directly involved in the service area concerned.
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	Nothing to provide	As per Section 5.4. Managers responsible for reviewing Stage 2 complaints are provided with guidance on the complaints process and the Housing Ombudsman's

				Complaint Handling Code to ensure complaints are reviewed consistently and in line with Code requirements.
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as “the complaint definition”. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	Yes	This is evidenced through the completion of a Complaint Investigation and Review Checklist (CIRC), which has been designed as a practical tool to support effective complaint handling and demonstrate compliance with the Complaint Handling Code.	At both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the complaints process, we will contact the resident to confirm our understanding of the complaint, discuss the outcome they are seeking, and request any additional information required to support a full and fair investigation.
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	Nothing to provide	When acknowledging a complaint at either Stage 1 or Stage 2, we will clearly set out the aspects of the complaint that will be investigated and seek clarification from the resident where any part of the complaint is unclear.
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:	Yes	All complaints received are dealt with confidentially and processed under UK Data Protection legislation.	Service managers will determine, based on a full review of the evidence and information available,

	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.			whether the facts of the complaint have been established. Complaints are not investigated or responded to by any member of staff who is the subject of the complaint or who has a conflict of interest, ensuring independence and fairness throughout the complaints process.
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	Nothing to provide	We aim to provide a written response to the complainant within the timescales set out in the Complaint Handling Code. Where this is not possible, we will clearly explain the reasons for the delay and agree appropriate intervals for further contact with the complainant until the complaint is resolved.
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a	Yes	As part of our tenancy sign-up process, we record information about any disabilities or vulnerabilities disclosed by residents, which is held on our housing management system.	Our Complaints and Feedback Policy explains that we want to ensure that we are providing an equitable service to all of our customers. As part of

	resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.		We have also recently undertaken a Tenant Census exercise to capture and update resident information to help inform and improve the way we shape and deliver our services. Where a resident advises us of a disability or vulnerability, we will make reasonable adjustments as required to support their needs. For example, where a resident has a visual impairment, we can arrange alternative formats and utilise specialist providers such as Prime Production, who offer translation, interpretation, and accessible communication services.	our feedback process, we may ask residents if their enquiry is related to any of the protected equality characteristics. Providing this information is voluntary, but we encourage this as it helps us assess if we are reaching all of our residents, that our services are appropriate for everyone's needs and that any shortfalls are investigated and resolved.
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.	Yes	During 2025-26, no complaints were refused to be escalated to Stage 2.	Complaints will normally progress through all stages of our complaints procedure unless there are valid reasons not to do so. Where we decide not to accept a complaint, we will provide the resident with a clear and detailed explanation of the reasons for this decision, along with information about their options.

				The Complaints and Feedback Policy clearly sets out the matters that can and cannot be considered under the policy.
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	Nothing to provide	All formal complaints and related correspondence are recorded on our housing management system. A dedicated case file is created on receipt of each complaint and includes the original complaint, acknowledgement, all correspondence with the resident and relevant parties, supporting evidence, and the final written decision.
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	Nothing to provide	Regardless of how a complaint is managed, we will clearly explain our understanding of the complaint, discuss the outcome the resident is seeking, and agree the actions to be taken. At all stages of the process, we will ensure that any parties involved in the complaint

				are given a fair opportunity to comment before a final decision is made. Where a valid complaint has no reasonable prospect of resolution - for example, where the complaint seeks actions that the Council is unable to take - we may refer the resident to the Ombudsman without requiring completion of all stages of the complaints process.
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	Yes	Unacceptable behaviour by complainants	Our Complaints and Feedback Policy includes a dedicated section on Unacceptable Behaviour. This recognises that when things go wrong, it can often feel personal and emotional. However, we will not tolerate threatening, abusive, or persistently vexatious behaviour towards anyone involved in delivering Council services. At the same time, we expect all Council staff and

				Councillors to treat residents with respect at all times. We also have a standalone Unacceptable Behaviour Policy, published on our website, which sets out how unacceptable behaviour will be managed consistently across our services.
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	Refer to our Unacceptable behaviour by complainants policy	During 2025-26, no tenants were registered under the Unacceptable Behaviour Policy. However, in the case where our Unacceptable Behaviour Policy is applied, and prior to restricting contact with the Council, an assessment will be made on their individual circumstances to determine whether this action is proportionate and considers the Equality Act. Prior to any restrictions, a warning will be issued first to give the person an opportunity to change their behaviour.

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	Nothing to provide	Before any expression of dissatisfaction is escalated to a complaint, we will, wherever possible, seek to resolve the issue through our standard service processes. When a complaint is received, it is recorded within our complaints system and allocated to the appropriate service area. Where a complaint involves multiple services, our contact centre will identify a lead service to take ownership and coordinate the response. A written response will be provided in line with the timescales set out in the Complaint Handling Code. Where this is not

				achievable, we will seek to agree an extension, clearly explaining the reasons and maintaining regular contact at agreed intervals with the complainant until the matter is resolved.
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	During 2025–26, a total of 218 Stage 1 complaints were received, and all were acknowledged within five working days.	Stage 1 complaints are acknowledged, defined and logged within 5 working days of the complaint being received.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	During 2025-26, 92% of all Stage 1 complaints were responded to within the Complaint Handling Code timescale.	We aim to provide a written decision to the complainant within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.
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.	Partially	During 2025–26, six of the 38 Stage 1 complaints that were extended (16%) exceeded the additional 10-working-day limit set out in the Complaint Handling Code. In addition, 10 complaints were not extended and failed to meet the initial 10-working-day response timescale.	Where it is not possible to provide a written decision to the complainant within 10 working days, we will be clear about the reasons why and arrange further contact at intervals agreed by the resident and us, until the complaint is resolved.

			Housing Services continue to address this with staff, and refresher training has recently been delivered to reinforce the requirement to comply with the Code. Any failure to do so will be managed through the Council's performance framework.	
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Nothing to provide	We have a standard template for officers to use when investigating complaints that require an extension to the response timescales. This template also includes the contact details for 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.	Yes	Outstanding actions are monitored using an action-tracker spreadsheet, enabling complaint handlers to track progress and ensure all outstanding works or actions are followed through.	When issuing a response to a complaint, our written decision will set out: • Confirmation of the stage at which the complaint has been handled • The details of the original complaint • The steps taken to investigate the matter • What has been considered, including

				relevant legislation, policies, and best practice • Our decision and the reasons for it • Any actions to be taken, along with the associated timescales • Any lessons learned and improvements identified as a result of the complaint • How the resident can escalate the complaint if they remain dissatisfied While a written response may conclude the complaint process, complaint handlers remain responsible for ensuring that any outstanding actions are completed and for keeping the resident appropriately updated.
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	Nothing to provide	As per Section 6.6

6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	Nothing to provide	Any additional complaints received during an investigation that relate to the original issue are incorporated into the existing Stage 1 complaint. As part of the Stage 1 process, the complainant is contacted and given the opportunity to explain and expand on their concerns, ensuring a full and thorough investigation and response that considers all relevant aspects. Where further complaints are raised that are not connected to the matters under investigation, these are recorded and managed as a new complaint.
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: - the complaint stage; - the complaint definition; - the decision on the complaint; - the reasons for any decisions made;	Yes	Nothing to provide	When issuing a response to a complaint, our written decision will set out: Confirmation of the stage at which the complaint has been handled

	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.			• The details of the original complaint • The steps taken to investigate the matter • What has been considered, including relevant legislation, policies, and best practice • Our decision and the reasons for it • Any actions to be taken, along with the associated timescales • Any lessons learned and improvements identified as a result of the complaint • How the resident can escalate the complaint if they remain dissatisfied
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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	Refer to our Complaints and Feedback Policy	Our Complaints and Feedback Policy explains that if a resident remains dissatisfied following the Stage 1 response, they may

				request escalation to Stage 2. Residents are encouraged to do this within one month of our Stage 1 decision; however, discretion will be applied where an escalation request is received outside the one-month period. At Stage 2, we review the Stage 1 response to determine whether the complaint was thoroughly investigated and appropriately addressed. If the resident is still dissatisfied after the Stage 2 outcome, they may have the right to escalate the complaint to the Ombudsman.
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	During 2025–26, a total of 47 Stage 2 complaints were received, and all were acknowledged within five working days.	Stage 2 complaints are acknowledged, defined and logged within 5 working days of the complaint being received.
6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are	Yes	Nothing to provide	We will clearly set out our understanding of the outstanding issues and the

	expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.			outcomes the resident has said they are seeking, requesting further clarification where any points are unclear. Complainants are also given the opportunity to provide any additional information they wish to submit as part of the Stage 2 complaint process.
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Nothing to provide	The Council uses different officers to manage complaints at Stage 1 and Stage 2, ensuring that the officer undertaking the Stage 2 review is not the same individual who handled the Stage 1 complaint. At Stage 2, a further investigation is carried out and the decision - whether upheld, amended, or unchanged - is made by a manager within the service who was not involved in the original response. The Stage 2 decision is also

				peer-reviewed by a manager from a different service area to that which handled the Stage 1 complaint. This peer-review process provides independent scrutiny and helps ensure a fair and impartial assessment by someone outside the originating service area.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	During 2025-26, 47 Stage 2 complaints were received: • 43 (91%) were responded to within the Complaint Handling Code • 4 (9%) were responded to outside the Complaint Handling Code.	A final response to a Stage 2 complaint will normally be issued within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged, unless additional time is required for further investigation or consultation.
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,	Partially	During 2025–26, no Stage 2 complaints that required an extension exceeded the additional 20-working-day limit set out in the Complaint Handling Code.	In exceptional circumstances where additional time is required for consultation or investigation, we will clearly explain the reasons and agree regular update intervals with the resident

	and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.		However, 4 complaints were not extended and failed to meet the initial 20-working-day response timescale. Housing Services continue to address this with staff, and refresher training has recently been delivered to reinforce the requirement to comply with the Code. Any failure to do so will be managed through the Council's performance framework.	until the complaint is resolved.
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	Nothing to provide	We have a standard template for officers to use when investigating complaints that require an extension to response timescales. The template also includes the Housing Ombudsman's contact details.
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	Complaints are responded to as soon as the outcome is known. However, even after a response has been issued, complaint handlers remain responsible for ensuring that any outstanding actions are completed and that	When responding to a complaint, our written decision will set out: • Confirmation that the complaint has been handled at Stage 2 • The details of the original complaint

			the resident is kept informed of progress.	• The steps taken to investigate the matter • What has been considered, including relevant legislation, policies, and best practice • Our decision and the reasons for it • Any next steps, including actions to be taken and associated timescales • Any lessons learned and service improvements identified as a result of the complaint • Information on how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman if the resident remains dissatisfied
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Nothing to provide	As per Section 6.17
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage;	Yes	Nothing to provide	As per Section 6.17

	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.			
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	Refer to our Complaints and Feedback Policy	Stage 2 is the final stage of our internal complaints process and brings together all relevant parties to provide the response. The Stage 2 decision is also peer-reviewed by a manager from a different service area to that which handled the Stage 1 complaint. This peer-review process provides independent scrutiny and helps ensure a fair and impartial assessment by someone

				outside the originating service area.
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Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	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: • 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	During 2025-26, 125 complaint responses (47%) acknowledged that something had gone wrong and the complaint was upheld.	Housing Services have a standard template that provides guidance to complaint-handling officers on the content of the final response. This includes: • A summary of the complaint and the outcomes the complainant is seeking • An outline of the steps taken to investigate the complaint • Findings and conclusions for each aspect of the complaint • Apologies and explanations where

				service failures have been identified • Details of any next steps or follow-up actions • Details of any compensation or goodwill gestures offered, where appropriate, in line with the compensation policy • Learning outcomes, including what has been learned from the complaint and any changes or improvements to be implemented (for example, improvements to working practices or procedures) • Signposting, where appropriate, to other services or sources of advice and support
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Our Compensation Policy was reviewed in September 2025 and has been based on the Housing Ombudsman's principles of good	Our compensation policy acknowledges that, in some cases, an apology alone is insufficient, and residents may be entitled to

			practice and guidance for landlords. During 2025-26, £7,966.87 was awarded in compensation.	compensation when service failures occur. The policy ensures that remedies are applied fairly and consistently, covering both statutory and discretionary compensation.
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	Nothing to provide	Complaint-handling officers are required to diarise and monitor any follow-up actions to ensure they are completed within the agreed timescales. Where compensation is offered, the resident is asked to complete and sign a Compensation Agreement form to provide their bank details. Once the form is received, the payment is processed, and a copy of the remittance advice is retained on the complaints case file.
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	Nothing to provide	All staff have access to the Housing Ombudsman's website and the Complaint Handling Code, which supports them in identifying

				appropriate remedies and putting matters right.
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Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include: - the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. - 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; - any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman; - the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; - any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and	Yes	Refer to our website www.stroud.gov.uk/tenants and leaseholders/complaints	A self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code is completed on an annual basis. Reports analysing complaint-handling performance are produced quarterly and annually and shared with the senior management team and performance Members. These reports include: - A summary of complaints that were and were not accepted - Any identified non-compliance with the Complaint Handling Code

	f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.			• Service improvements implemented as a result of learning from complaints • Any performance reports issued by the Ombudsman Any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman relating to complaints handling
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	www.stroud.gov.uk/tenants and leaseholders/complaints	Our annual complaints performance and service improvement report is reviewed with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Housing Committee, along with the Committee's performance monitors. The 2025–26 self-assessment will be presented to Housing Committee for approval and for the governing body's response. It will then be published alongside the self-assessment and the Member Responsible for

				Complaints' (MRC) response to the report.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	Nothing to provide	The self-assessment will be reviewed following any significant restructure, merger, or procedural change, with oversight provided by the Housing Quality Assurance Team.
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	Nothing to provide	Any review or update of the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation will be undertaken by the Housing Quality Assurance Team.
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	Nothing to provide	If there is any disruption to the complaints process that prevents compliance with the Complaint Handling Code, the Housing Quality Assurance Team will ensure that both the Ombudsman and affected residents are informed, and that our website is updated accordingly.

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	As part of our ongoing improvement work, we have developed our original Closing Statement into a more robust Complaint Investigation & Review Checklist. This internal document supports complaint handlers in applying the key principles of our complaints process and the Complaint Handling Code. It enables them to record relevant information and findings that contributed to the complaint and places a strong emphasis on identifying learning outcomes and the service improvements that will be implemented as a result.	The Housing Quality Assurance Team produces quarterly complaints reports, which are presented to and scrutinised by the Housing Improvement Group, led by senior officers. The group reviews trends and considers whether changes to service delivery are required in response to identified learning. These reports are also shared with our Housing Oversight Board, made up for senior officers and Members, and our MRC.
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	Yes	An audit to review the adequacy of the Council's arrangements for complaint management was undertaken in June 2026. This audit assessed compliance with the Council's Complaints and	Complaints are a standing agenda item at our Housing Managers meetings to maintain awareness of complaint handling and to promote a positive

	introduce positive changes in service delivery.		Feedback Policy, the effectiveness of learning and service improvement arrangements, access to systems and databases, and performance management information. The audit provided assurance that Housing Services' complaint handling arrangements are compliant and well-governed, with strong evidence of transparency and effective oversight.	complaints culture, with teams committed to achieving the best outcomes for residents.
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	Yes	This year, we have introduced a Service Improvement Delivery Log to strengthen our approach to capturing and implementing learning from complaints. This log provides a clear framework for recording identified service improvements and tracking their progress through to completion. Team managers are required to update the log on a monthly basis, ensuring that actions move from "identified" to "in progress" and ultimately to "delivered." This promotes	Feedback and performance relating to complaints are shared with senior housing staff who are part of the Housing Improvement Group. Complaints also form part of our resident engagement activity and will be scrutinised as part of our resident sounding boards and scrutiny panels. Complaint performance is reported through the

			accountability and oversight, helping to ensure that improvements are not only identified but fully implemented. The log also supports ongoing monitoring and review of service enhancements, enabling us to evidence how feedback and complaints directly inform changes to service delivery and contribute to continuous improvement.	Council's performance framework and is considered at each Housing Committee meeting.
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	Nothing to provide	The Strategic Head of Housing holds overall responsibility for complaint handling, supported by the Head of Tenant Relationships and the Head of Asset & Investment, who each take ownership for complaint handling within their respective service areas. These accountable officers are members of the Housing Improvement Group, where they review trends and emerging issues as part of this forum and wider service improvement activity.

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	Nothing to provide	The Council operates a Housing Oversight Board; a joint officer and Member-led group focused on housing services. The Chair of the Housing Committee serves as the appointed MRC, supported by the Vice-Chair.
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	Nothing to provide	The MRC receives performance reports, including updates on complaints and complaint handling, through the Housing Oversight Board ahead of each Housing Committee meeting. The Strategic Head of Housing meets regularly with the MRC and Vice-Chair (at least twice a month) to discuss key issues, including complaints.
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	Yes	Nothing to provide	A complaints performance report is shared with the MRC and Vice-Chair, as well as members of the Housing Oversight Board,

	complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.			including tenant representatives. This report feeds into the Housing Committee reports considered at each meeting and includes: • Regular updates on complaint volumes, categories, and outcomes • Trend analysis • Updates on Ombudsman cases • Annual and quarterly performance reporting
9.8	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to: a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and	Yes	Nothing to provide	The Council operates a performance framework in which complaint-handling officers have a specific objective focused on complaint management. This requires staff to take a positive, professional, and collaborative approach to resolving complaints, without apportioning blame.

	c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.			
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