

# HOUSING OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINT HANDLING CODE: SELF-ASSESSMENT 2024



The Housing Ombudsman Service’s statutory Complaint Handling Code aims to achieve best practice in complaint handling and ultimately to provide a better service to residents.

The Housing Ombudsman Service requires landlords to undertake a self-assessment against the new Code and publish the results as at least an annual exercise. Barnet Homes (on the behalf of the landlord and registered provider the **London Borough of Barnet**) has completed its annual self-assessment and finds that it is compliant with the Code. This self-assessment was reviewed by the Barnet Homes Board on 27 June 2024 and will be reviewed and ratified by the London Borough of Barnet’s Cabinet, in July 2024.

## Housing Ombudsman Service Self-Assessment requirements:

- 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.

Section	Code Provision	Comply	Evidence	Commentary / Explanation
<b>Section 1: Definition of a complaint</b>				
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <i>‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.’</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Barnet Homes Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 5.1.1. <a href="http://thebarnetgroup.org/bh/download/complaints-and-compliments-policy">thebarnetgroup.org/bh/download/complaints-and-compliments-policy</a>	5.1 What is a complaint? 5.1.1 The Barnet Group defines a complaint as being an expression of dissatisfaction, however made and whether justified or not, about the standard of service it has provided, or actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual customer or group of customers. A customer does not need to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. When a customer expresses dissatisfaction we will give them the choice to make a complaint. The dissatisfaction can be with service failures including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the quality of the service provided or the work carried out;</li> <li>• the action or lack of action taken by staff;</li> <li>• the attitude or behaviour of staff;</li> <li>• missed appointments;</li> <li>• a failure to comply with policy, procedure, or standards of service delivery; or</li> <li>• cost.</li> </ul>
1.3	A resident does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord’s complaints policy.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Barnet Homes Complaints and Compliments Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clause 5.1.1</li> <li>• clauses 5.3.1 – 5.3.2</li> </ul>	5.1 What is a complaint? 5.1.1 [...] A customer does not need to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. When a customer expresses dissatisfaction we will give them the choice to make a complaint.  5.3 Complaints through third parties 5.3.1 We recognise that some people who wish to complain may need support to do so. We accept complaints made by third parties (including, for example, family members, friends, advocates, or support workers) on behalf of a complainant, and will take steps in line with our Data Protection Policy to make sure that the complainant is in agreement, which may include seeking written permission where this is necessary. We will also give customers the opportunity to be accompanied or represented by a third party at a meeting with us about a complaint where this is reasonable. 5.3.2 Councillors and Members of Parliament (MPs) may also bring a formal complaint by acting as their constituent’s advocate; formal complaints will be handled in line with this Complaints and Compliments Policy, and not as an enquiry under our Members’ Enquiry Procedure.

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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 5.1.3.2	<p>5.1.3 Complaints not covered by this policy [...]</p> <p>5.1.3.2 Matters that are excluded under this policy and will not be dealt with as a complaint include: [...]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a first request for service (such as a request that The Barnet Group provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or otherwise takes action to put something right, or reconsiders a decision), information, or an explanation of our policies and procedures;</li> </ul>
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 5.1.3.3</p> <p>Complaints Handling Procedure, clauses I.i – I.iii</p>	<p>Policy:</p> <p>5.1.3 Complaints not covered by this policy</p> <p>5.1.3.3 If a customer complains about the response to a service request, The Barnet Group will not stop its efforts to address the service request and will raise the complaint even if this remains ongoing.</p> <p>Procedure:</p> <p>I. Before the complaints process – early, local resolution of concerns</p> <p>I.i Wherever possible, we aim to resolve matters informally. If a customer raises a concern with the Customer Contact team or another officer, with the customer's agreement they may take immediate steps (i.e., there and then) to try to resolve the concern. This may take the form of an apology, explanation of what has happened, or agreeing actions to be taken to resolve the situation. Although we may try to resolve matters informally at this first point of contact, if a customer expresses concern we must give them the choice to make a complaint.</p> <p>I.ii Any steps taken must be recorded clearly on QL. Actions taken must not obstruct access to the complaints process or result in any unreasonable delay. If further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter, or if the resident tells us they wish to make a complaint, we must move to the formal complaint process.</p> <p>I.iii If a complainant has made a service request (e.g., to provide or improve a service, fix a problem or otherwise take action to put something right, or reconsider a decision) and wishes to complain about the response to this request, we must raise a complaint but also must not stop our efforts to address the service request.</p>
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Complaints and Compliments Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clause 5.1.3.2</li> <li>• clause 5.2.4</li> </ul>	<p>5.1.3 Complaints not covered by this policy [...]</p> <p>5.1.3.2 Matters that are excluded under this policy and will not be dealt with as a complaint include: [...]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey;</li> </ul> <p>5.2 Making a complaint [...]</p> <p>5.2.4 When The Barnet Group asks for wider feedback about its services it will provide details of how customers can complain.</p>

Section 2: Exclusions

2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clause 5.1.3.1</li> <li>• clause 3.2</li> </ul>	<p>5.1.3 Complaints not covered by this policy</p> <p>5.1.3.1 We will accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so, and the individual circumstances of each complaint will be considered when deciding whether to accept it. If the issue is not a complaint within the definition of this policy, we will deal with it through the relevant alternative procedure, where applicable. Making a complaint may not be the best route for resolving some issues; this might be because the issue is outside of our control or because there is another appeal process, although you may complain about this if we fail to manage this effectively.</p> <p>3. Policy Statement</p> <p>3.2 We will deal with complaints impartially, objectively, and fairly, and ensure that complainants do not receive any adverse treatment because of their complaint. We will give the customer a fair chance to set out their position, and we will deal with complaints on their merit with an open mind.</p>
2.2	<p>A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.</li> <li>• Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.</li> </ul> <p>Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy clauses 5.1.3.1 – 5.1.3.2	<p>5.1.3 Complaints not covered by this policy</p> <p>5.1.3.1 We will accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so, and the individual circumstances of each complaint will be considered when deciding whether to accept it. If the issue is not a complaint within the definition of this policy, we will deal with it through the relevant alternative procedure, where applicable. Making a complaint may not be the best route for resolving some issues; this might be because the issue is outside of our control or because there is another appeal process, although you may complain about this if we fail to manage this effectively.</p> <p>5.1.3.2 Matters that are excluded under this policy and will not be dealt with as a complaint include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complaints submitted twelve months or more after the issue occurred or the customer becoming aware of the issue, and being brought to The Barnet Group's attention for the first time. (Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Complaints and Information team, particularly if a complaint concerns a safeguarding or health and safety issue, or if illness or personal circumstances have prevented the complaint being reported to us);</li> <li>• matters that have already been considered under the Complaints and Compliments Policy, where we are satisfied that a complete and fair response has already been provided;</li> <li>• a first request for service (such as a request that The Barnet Group provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or otherwise takes action to put something right, or reconsiders a decision), information, or an explanation of our policies and procedures;</li> <li>• an expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey;</li> <li>• neighbour disputes or complaints about the conduct or behaviour of another resident (including anti-social behaviour, hate crime, or domestic violence), unless the complaint refers to our failure to deal with a disagreement appropriately;</li> <li>• issues where the customer or The Barnet Group has commenced legal action (i.e. details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, have been filed at court);</li> <li>• appeals against policy decisions or services where there is another formal appeal process, (e.g., housing applications), another review process (e.g., potential or actual data protection breaches or internal reviews regarding FOI Act requests), or where there is an alternative statutory appeal or tribunal processes (including appeals against statutory Notices);</li> <li>• services for which The Barnet Group is not responsible (e.g., council-provided services);</li> <li>• where the complainant is an employee of The Barnet Group (unless they occupy a property owned or managed by The Barnet Group and the complaint relates to issues with their tenancy or landlord services); and/or</li> <li>• complaints that have already been decided by a court or independent tribunal.</li> </ul>

2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 5.1.3.2	<p>Policy:</p> <p>5.1.3 Complaints not covered by this policy</p> <p>5.1.3.2 Matters that are excluded under this policy and will not be dealt with as a complaint include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>complaints submitted twelve months or more after the issue occurred or the customer becoming aware of the issue, and being brought to The Barnet Group's attention for the first time. (Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Complaints and Information team, particularly if a complaint concerns a safeguarding or health and safety issue, or if illness or personal circumstances have prevented the complaint being reported to us);</li> </ul>
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 1.2	<p>Procedure:</p> <p>1. Stage 1</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Within 5 working days of receipt of complaint</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>1.2 If the complaint is found to not be suitable for the complaints process, the Complaints and Information team must write to the complainant to explain the reasons for this, which will be as described in the policy, and inform the complainant of their right to take the decision to an Ombudsman, as appropriate to the subject of the complaint. The Complaints and Information team must save any refusal to consider a complaint under the policy on SharePoint, and must log the refusal.</p>
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Complaints and Compliments Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clause 5.1.3.1</li> <li>clause 3.2</li> </ul>	<p>5.1.3 Complaints not covered by this policy</p> <p>5.1.3.1 We will accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so, and the individual circumstances of each complaint will be considered when deciding whether to accept it. If the issue is not a complaint within the definition of this policy, we will deal with it through the relevant alternative procedure, where applicable. Making a complaint may not be the best route for resolving some issues; this might be because the issue is outside of our control or because there is another appeal process, although you may complain about this if we fail to manage this effectively.</p> <p>3. Policy Statement</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>3.2 We will deal with complaints impartially, objectively, and fairly, and ensure that complainants do not receive any adverse treatment because of their complaint. We will give the customer a fair chance to set out their position, and we will deal with complaints on their merit with an open mind.</p>

Section 3: Accessibility and awareness

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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Complaints and Compliments Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clause 5.2.2</li> <li>• clauses 6.2 – 6.3</li> </ul> <p>Complaints process overview on website: <a href="http://thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us/complaints">thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us/complaints</a></p> <p>Easy Read complaints guide: <a href="http://thebarnetgroup.org/bh/download/barnet-homes-complaints-guide-easy-read">thebarnetgroup.org/bh/download/barnet-homes-complaints-guide-easy-read</a></p>	<p>5.2 Making a complaint</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>5.2.2 If something goes wrong, we want to make it easy for customers to make a complaint. Complaints can be raised in any way and with any member of staff. However, to make it easy to make a complaint, we encourage customers to use one of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by email <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Barnet Homes - Talk2Us@barnethomes.org</li> </ul> </li> <li>• through our websites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Barnet Homes – <a href="http://www.thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us/">www.thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us/</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• by telephone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Barnet Homes - 020 8080 6587</li> </ul> </li> <li>• by letter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Complaints and Information team, The Barnet Group, 3rd Floor, 2 Bristol Avenue, London, NW9 4EW</li> </ul> </li> <li>• through our corporate social media (to maintain confidentiality and privacy we will then ask the individual to contact us with more detail by direct (private) message or through the options above so that we can investigate the matter);</li> <li>• in person (e.g., at reception, during a home visit, or at the place people are supported); or</li> <li>• by asking someone to tell us for you (with your permission, including a family member, friend, advocate, or support worker).</li> </ul> <p>6 EQUALITIES</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>6.2 We will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities, and may provide communications in alternative formats where practicable and appropriate to assist customers with distinct communication needs. Exceptions may be made to this policy to accommodate an individual's needs, and The Barnet Group will consider requests for reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>6.3 We will support customers who require assistance to make a complaint. Customers may also be signposted to external agencies for independent support or advocacy where appropriate. Information about support available can also be found on our websites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnet Homes - <a href="http://www.barnethomes.org/complaints">www.barnethomes.org/complaints</a></li> </ul>
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 5.2.2	<p>5.2 Making a complaint</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>5.2.2 If something goes wrong, we want to make it easy for customers to make a complaint. Complaints can be raised in any way and with any member of staff.</p> <p>Regular communications to staff, including all-staff emails and manager briefings, reiterate this principle. Step-by-step guidance on how to log a complaint on the housing management system is available on the intranet.</p>

3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 3.1	<p><b>3 POLICY STATEMENT</b></p> <p>3.1 We are committed to continuously improving what we do and the way we do it as a result of feedback from our customers or those affected by our services. This policy is intended to enable a positive complaints culture across our organisation, and to assist us to listen to and learn from our customers so we can address any service failures and put things right when they have gone wrong, identify areas for improvement or areas of good practice, and monitor services in a customer-focused way.</p> <p>Barnet Homes publishes a wide range of information (including a dedicated page on its website and information in the resident newsletter that is received by all residents) to encourage access to its complaints process, and typically receives a volume of complaints that indicates the process is accessible and that residents feel and trust that they are able to complain. Performance reports reiterate this positive complaint culture.</p>
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Complaints and Compliments Policy</p> <p>Complaints process overview on website: <a href="http://thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us/complaints">thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us/complaints</a></p> <p>Complaints leaflet: <a href="http://thebarnetgroup.org/bh/download/complaints-guide/">thebarnetgroup.org/bh/download/complaints-guide/</a></p> <p>Easy Read complaints guide: <a href="http://thebarnetgroup.org/bh/download/barnet-homes-complaints-guide-easy-read">thebarnetgroup.org/bh/download/barnet-homes-complaints-guide-easy-read</a></p>	<p>The Complaints and Compliments Policy is clearly structured and is available on Barnet Homes' website. It was reviewed by residents who considered whether it is clear and easy to understand. The policy includes information about the two-stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timescales we will work to.</p> <p>The complaints page on the website also includes a summary of the process, and available to residents on the page is a leaflet that contains a short guide to the complaints process, and an Easy Read complaints guide.</p>
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Complaints and Compliments Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clause 5.2.5</li> <li>• clause 5.4.6.1 – 5.4.6.2</li> <li>• Appendix 1</li> </ul>	<p><b>5.2 Making a complaint</b></p> <p>5.2.5 We will publicise our Complaints and Compliments Policy, information about the complaints Ombudsmen, and the Complaint Handling Code on our website on our dedicated complaints pages: Barnet Homes – <a href="http://www.thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us/complaints">www.thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us/complaints</a></p> <p><b>5.4.6 Following completion of The Barnet Group's process</b></p> <p>5.4.6.1 Following completion of The Barnet Group's complaints process at Stage 2, or if we refuse their request to escalate the complaint following Stage 1, if the complainant is not satisfied with our response they have the right to bring their complaint to an independent Ombudsman or Scheme for review:</p> <p>5.4.6.2 The escalation route will be determined by the nature of the complaint, and complainants will be given advice about who they can contact at the conclusion of our process. Further information regarding this can be found at Appendix 1 - Complaint External Escalation Route.</p> <p><b>Appendix 1 – Complaint External Escalation Route</b></p> <p>Complaints related to landlord services</p> <p>Note: Whilst the Housing Ombudsman Service will not investigate a case until it has exhausted the internal complaints process, residents who have made or wish to make a complaint about landlord services may contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any time to seek impartial advice or support in making their complaint.</p> <p>1.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with our response after Stage 2, or if we refuse their request to escalate the complaint following Stage 1, they have the right to approach the independent Housing Ombudsman Service.</p> <p>1.2 The Housing Ombudsman Service can be contacted at:</p> <p>Address: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ</p> <p>Telephone: 0300 111 3000</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk">www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk</a></p>

3.6	Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.	☑ Yes	<p>Complaints and Compliments Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clause 5.2.2</li> <li>• clauses 5.3.1 – 5.3.2</li> </ul>	<p>5.2 Making a complaint [...]</p> <p>5.2.2 If something goes wrong, we want to make it easy for customers to make a complaint. Complaints can be raised in any way and with any member of staff. However, to make it easy to make a complaint, we encourage customers to use one of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by email <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Barnet Homes - Talk2Us@barnethomes.org</li> </ul> </li> <li>• through our websites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Barnet Homes – <a href="http://www.thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us/">www.thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us/</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• by telephone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Barnet Homes - 020 8080 6587</li> </ul> </li> <li>• by letter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Complaints and Information team, The Barnet Group, 3rd Floor, 2 Bristol Avenue, London, NW9 4EW</li> </ul> </li> <li>• through our corporate social media (to maintain confidentiality and privacy we will then ask the individual to contact us with more detail by direct (private) message or through the options above so that we can investigate the matter);</li> <li>• in person (e.g., at reception, during a home visit, or at the place people are supported); or</li> <li>• by asking someone to tell us for you (with your permission, including a family member, friend, advocate, or support worker).</li> </ul> <p>5.3 Complaints through third parties</p> <p>5.3.1 We recognise that some people who wish to complain may need support to do so. We accept complaints made by third parties (including, for example, family members, friends, advocates, or support workers) on behalf of a complainant, and will take steps in line with our Data Protection Policy to make sure that the complainant is in agreement, which may include seeking written permission where this is necessary. We will also give customers the opportunity to be accompanied or represented by a third party at a meeting with us about a complaint where this is reasonable.</p> <p>5.3.2 Councillors and Members of Parliament (MPs) may also bring a formal complaint by acting as their constituent's advocate; formal complaints will be handled in line with this Complaints and Compliments Policy, and not as an enquiry under our Members' Enquiry Procedure.</p>
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.	☑ Yes	<p>Complaints and Compliments Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clause 5.4.6.1 – 5.4.6.2</li> <li>• Appendix 1</li> </ul> <p>Complaints process overview on website: <a href="http://thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us/complaints">thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us/complaints</a></p> <p>Complaints leaflet: <a href="http://thebarnetgroup.org/bh/download/complaints-guide/">thebarnetgroup.org/bh/download/complaints-guide/</a></p> <p>Easy Read complaints guide: <a href="http://thebarnetgroup.org/bh/download/barnet-homes-complaints-guide-easy-read">thebarnetgroup.org/bh/download/barnet-homes-complaints-guide-easy-read</a></p>	<p>5.4.6 Following completion of The Barnet Group's process</p> <p>5.4.6.1 Following completion of The Barnet Group's complaints process at Stage 2, or if we refuse their request to escalate the complaint following Stage 1, if the complainant is not satisfied with our response they have the right to bring their complaint to an independent Ombudsman or Scheme for review:</p> <p>5.4.6.2 The escalation route will be determined by the nature of the complaint, and complainants will be given advice about who they can contact at the conclusion of our process. Further information regarding this can be found at Appendix 1 - Complaint External Escalation Route.</p> <p>Appendix 1 – Complaint External Escalation Route</p> <p>Complaints related to landlord services</p> <p>Note: Whilst the Housing Ombudsman Service will not investigate a case until it has exhausted the internal complaints process, residents who have made or wish to make a complaint about landlord services may contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any time to seek impartial advice or support in making their complaint.</p> <p>1.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with our response after Stage 2, or if we refuse their request to escalate the complaint following Stage 1, they have the right to approach the independent Housing Ombudsman Service.</p>

1.2 The Housing Ombudsman Service can be contacted at:  
 Address: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ  
 Telephone: 0300 111 3000  
 Website: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Website:  
*Following completion of our process*  
 Complaints related to social housing landlord services  
 If you are not satisfied with our response after Stage 2, or if we refuse your request to escalate the complaint following Stage 1, you can ask the Housing Ombudsman Service to review your complaint. It investigates matters fairly and impartially and is free to use.  
 When we send you our Stage 2 response or if we refuse your request to escalate the complaint to Stage 2, we will tell you about your right to approach the Housing Ombudsman.


Contact details  
 Housing Ombudsman  
 Website: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)  
 Telephone: 0300 111 3000  
 Address: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ

*Support in making a complaint*  
 Customers may need support to make their complaint, or may like to seek independent advice. Whilst we cannot guarantee they will be able to offer support, and other specialist organisations may also be available, the organisations below may be able to help:

Housing Ombudsman Service  
 If your complaint is about landlord services, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any time throughout your complaint, to ask their dispute support advisors for impartial advice.  
 Website: [housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://housing-ombudsman.org.uk)  
 Telephone: 0300 111 3000  
 Website: [housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/outcome-page-help-complain-landlord](http://housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/outcome-page-help-complain-landlord)

**Section 4: Complaint handling staff**

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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clauses 4.6 - 4.7	<p><b>4 RESPONSIBILITIES</b></p> <p>4.6 Designated complaint handlers are responsible for acting sensitively and fairly when investigating complaints and resolving disputes. They will deal with complaints on their merits, act independently and have an open mind, and consider all information and evidence carefully. They are responsible for identifying required actions to resolve issues and for monitoring their delivery, and for identifying lessons learnt from complaints. They must follow our Complaint Handling Procedure at all times, working in line with this policy, undertake regular training and attend any required briefings on good practice and effective complaints handling.</p> <p>4.7 The Complaints and Information team will be the central point of contact for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff, and will provide internal advice, guidance, and challenge on complaints handling to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints.</li> <li>• complainants, where this is appropriate, and will provide appropriate advice, guidance, and support.</li> <li>• the Housing Ombudsman Service, Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, and Property Redress Scheme.</li> </ul> <p>The team will oversee the reporting and performance management of complaints, regularly providing information regarding trends and lessons learnt from complaints to management teams, the Executive Management Team, and Boards and Committees as appropriate.</p>
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes		The Complaints and Information Team oversees the complaint handling process and has access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. Service area complaint handlers are responsible for investigating and responding to complaints, and appropriate individuals within the services are designated as undertaking this role and have the authority and autonomy to do so effectively.
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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Complaints and Compliments Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clause 3.1</li> <li>• clauses 4.6 - 4.7</li> <li>• clause 7.1</li> </ul>	<p><b>3 POLICY STATEMENT</b></p> <p>3.1 We are committed to continuously improving what we do and the way we do it as a result of feedback from our customers or those affected by our services. This policy is intended to enable a positive complaints culture across our organisation, and to assist us to listen to and learn from our customers so we can address any service failures and put things right when they have gone wrong, identify areas for improvement or areas of good practice, and monitor services in a customer-focused way.</p> <p><b>4 RESPONSIBILITIES</b></p> <p>4.6 Designated complaint handlers are responsible for acting sensitively and fairly when investigating complaints and resolving disputes. They will deal with complaints on their merits, act independently and have an open mind, and consider all information and evidence carefully. They are responsible for identifying required actions to resolve issues and for monitoring their delivery, and for identifying lessons learnt from complaints. They must follow our Complaint Handling Procedure at all times, working in line with this policy, undertake regular training and attend any required briefings on good practice and effective complaints handling.</p> <p>4.7 The Complaints and Information team will be the central point of contact for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff, and will provide internal advice, guidance, and challenge on complaints handling to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints.</li> <li>• complainants, where this is appropriate, and will provide appropriate advice, guidance, and support.</li> <li>• the Housing Ombudsman Service, Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, and Property Redress Scheme.</li> </ul> <p>The team will oversee the reporting and performance management of complaints, regularly providing information regarding trends and lessons learnt from complaints to management teams, the Executive Management Team, and Boards and Committees as appropriate.</p>

				<p><b>7 MONITORING AND REVIEW</b></p> <p>7.1 We will monitor the effectiveness and implementation of this policy, our complaints handling, and any trends in complaints and compliments, and will recommend changes to improve service delivery. Our employees will receive regular training and briefings on effective complaint handling.</p> <p>Complaint handlers undertake annual e-learning on effective complaints handling that covers good practice and customer care, in addition to periodic briefings on good practice and how to deal with complaints. Ad-hoc training, coaching, and instruction is also provided by the Complaints and Information Team where needed or requested. There is a detailed section in the Complaint Handling Procedure on learning lessons from complaints, and bespoke guidance is provided on the intranet including a guide to Identifying Learning from Complaints and a Learning from Complaints Toolkit. Additional guidance on the intranet includes Complaint Handling Good Practice, Effective Complaint Handling Principles, and Complaint Response Letters – 8 Golden Rules.</p>
<b>Section 5: The complaint handling process</b>				
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Complaints and Compliments Policy</p> <p>Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 3.2</p>	<p><b>3 POLICY STATEMENT</b></p> <p>[...]</p> <p>3.2 We will deal with complaints impartially, objectively, and fairly, and ensure that complainants do not receive any adverse treatment because of their complaint. We will give the customer a fair chance to set out their position, and we will deal with complaints on their merit with an open mind.</p>
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Complaints and Compliments Policy</p> <p>Complaints process overview on website: <a href="http://thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us/complaints">thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us/complaints</a></p> <p>Complaints leaflet: <a href="http://thebarnetgroup.org/bh/download/complaints-guide/">thebarnetgroup.org/bh/download/complaints-guide/</a></p> <p>Easy Read complaints guide: <a href="http://thebarnetgroup.org/bh/download/barnet-homes-complaints-guide-easy-read">thebarnetgroup.org/bh/download/barnet-homes-complaints-guide-easy-read</a></p>	<p>Barnet Homes operates a two-stage process. This is documented in the Complaints and Compliments Policy and on the complaints page on the website.</p>  <pre> graph LR     S1[Stage 1 Investigation and Resolution] --&gt; ER[Escalation Request Review]     ER --&gt; S2[Stage 2 Senior Officer Review]     S2 --&gt; EE[External Escalation]   </pre>
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	See 5.2	See 5.2
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Not applicable	Not applicable
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Not applicable	Not applicable
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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Complaint Handling Procedure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clauses 1.2 – 1.3</li> <li>clauses 2.2 – 2.3</li> </ul>	<p>1. Stage 1</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Within 5 working days of receipt of complaint</p>

	<p>definition". If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.</p>			<p>1.2 The Complaints and Information team will review the complaint and make a decision about whether it is accepted under the Complaints and Compliments Policy, using their discretion as necessary. The Complaints and Information team (and the Housing Options team and Property Services team for those service's complaints) will ask the complainant for clarification if any aspect of the complaint is unclear, to define the complaint.</p> <p>1.3 If the complaint is accepted under the policy, the Complaints and Information team (and the Housing Options team and Property Services team for those services' complaints) must send an acknowledgement email or letter to the complainant. The acknowledgment must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a brief summary of the complaint (including clearly stating if we are not responsible for any aspects of the complaint) and the outcomes the complainant is seeking;</li> <li>• who is investigating it and their contact details;</li> <li>• the complaint reference number; and</li> <li>• the date by which they can expect to receive a response (which will be within 10 working days of the complaint's acknowledgement).</li> </ul> <p>2. Stage 2 Day 1 [...] Within 5 working days of receipt of Stage 2 complaint</p> <p>2.2 If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at Stage 1, the Complaints and Information team will make the final decision as to whether a complaint will be escalated to the next stage. Complainants must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a Stage 2 consideration, but the Complaints and Information team may contact the complainant to ask for clarification if any aspect of the complaint is unclear, so the full definition of the complaint can be agreed with the complainant. [...]</p> <p>2.3 If escalation of the complaint is agreed, the Complaints and Information team must send an acknowledgement letter or email to the complainant (blind copying the Stage 2 complaint handler if sent by email). The acknowledgement must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a brief summary of the complaint;</li> <li>• advise who is investigating it and their contact details;</li> <li>• the complaint reference number;</li> <li>• the date by which they can expect to receive a response (which will be within 20 working days of the escalation acknowledgement).</li> </ul>
5.7	<p>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.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Complaint Handling Procedure, Appendix 1 – standard wording - acknowledgements</p>	<p>Appendix 1 – Standard wording – acknowledgements</p> <p>Stage 1 I am writing to acknowledge your recent complaint, which we understand to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul> <p>[set out summary of complaint, using bullet points if necessary] [I must advise you that the following part(s) of your complaint will not be responded to as Barnet Homes is not responsible for these matters / this matter. This is the responsibility of [organisation].] We understand that to resolve your complaint, you are seeking the following outcome(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ...</li> </ul> <p>Stage 2 – For use by Complaints and Information team I am writing to acknowledge your recent request for your complaint (reference number XXXXX) to be escalated to Stage 2 of our complaints process. We understand your complaint to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [set out summary of complaint, using bullet points if necessary]</li> </ul>

				<p>[I must advise you that the following part(s) of your complaint will not be responded to as Barnet Homes is not responsible for these matters / this matter. This is the responsibility of [organisation].]</p> <p>We understand that to resolve your complaint, you are seeking the following outcome(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ...</li> </ul>
5.8	<p>At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;</li> <li>give the resident a fair chance to set out their position;</li> <li>take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and</li> <li>consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.</li> </ol>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 3.2</p> <p>Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 1.13</p>	<p>Policy:</p> <p><b>3 POLICY STATEMENT</b></p> <p>[...]</p> <p>3.2 We will deal with complaints impartially, objectively, and fairly, and ensure that complainants do not receive any adverse treatment because of their complaint. We will give the customer a fair chance to set out their position, and we will deal with complaints on their merit with an open mind</p> <p>Procedure:</p> <p>1. Stage 1</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Following acknowledgement of a Stage 1 complaint</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Investigating a Stage 1 complaint</p> <p>1.13 The Stage 1 complaint handler's complaint investigation must be conducted in an impartial manner, seeking sufficient, reliable information from both the complainant and the business so that fair and appropriate findings and recommendations can be made. The Stage 1 complaint handler should ensure they are empathetic and efficient in their handling of a complaint and their contact with a complainant.</p> <p>The Stage 1 complaint handler must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deal with complaints on their merits;</li> <li>• act independently and have an open mind;</li> <li>• give the complainant a fair chance to set out their position;</li> <li>• take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest;</li> <li>• consider all information and evidence carefully (including, for any recurring problems, any older reports as part of the background to the complaint if this will help to resolve the issue for the complainant); and</li> <li>• keep the complaint confidential as far as possible, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter.</li> </ul>
5.9	<p>Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 1.7.1</p>	<p>1. Stage 1</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>1.7 If it will not be possible to provide a response within the standard 10 working days – exceptional circumstances only</p> <p>1.7.1 If it will not be possible to provide a response within the standard 10 working days due to the complexity of the issue, the Stage 1 complaint handler must write to the complainant to inform them of the clear timeframe for when the response will be received and explain the delay. The extension should not exceed an additional 10 working days without good reason (20 working days in total from the formal acknowledgement of the complaint). It is strongly recommended that this is communicated to the complainant within 5 working days of the complaint being assigned.</p> <p>The reason for extending a complaint must be reasonable, and extensions cannot be agreed simply because the complaint investigation has not been prioritised.</p> <p>Where a response to a complaint will fall outside these timescales, the complaint handler must agree with the complainant suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.</p>

5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 6.2  Reasonable Adjustments to Services Policy	6 EQUALITIES [...] 6.2 We will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities, and may provide communications in alternative formats where practicable and appropriate to assist customers with distinct communication needs. Exceptions may be made to this policy to accommodate an individual's needs, and The Barnet Group will consider requests for reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010.
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clauses 5.4.3.2 – 5.4.3.3.	5.4.3 Requests to escalate complaints to Stage 2 5.4.3.2 The Barnet Group will not unreasonably deny a request for a complaint to be reviewed at Stage 2. The Complaints and Information team will consider all requests for escalation on their individual merits, and will take into account the customer's perspective and the steps that have been taken. The team will determine if the complaint is eligible to be escalated, and will explain the decision fully in writing within five working days of the request being received. 5.4.3.3 The Barnet Group will not escalate a complaint to Stage 2 for any of the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a response to the complaint has not yet been provided at Stage 1;</li> <li>• six months or more have passed since the Stage 1 response was provided (unless exceptional circumstances apply);</li> <li>• the complainant is raising only new issues (instead, these will be dealt with as a new complaint at Stage 1);</li> <li>• it is a first request for service, information, or explanation of our policies and procedures;</li> <li>• it is a report of a neighbour dispute or anti-social behaviour, hate crime, or domestic violence;</li> <li>• the customer or The Barnet Group has commenced legal action (i.e. details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, have been filed at court);</li> <li>• it is an appeal against a policy decision or services where there is another appeals process, or there is a statutory appeal or tribunal process;</li> <li>• it concerns services for which The Barnet Group is not responsible; and/or</li> <li>• the matter has already been decided by a court or independent tribunal.</li> </ul>
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clause 1.22</li> <li>• clause 2.20</li> </ul>	1. Stage 1 [...] Investigating a Stage 1 complaint [...] Within 10 working days of acknowledgement of complaint [...] 1.22 A full record must be kept of the complaint, any review, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the complainant, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys. All relevant documents and emails, including the final complaint responses, must be saved on SharePoint by the complaint handler.  2. Stage 2 [...] Investigating a Stage 2 complaint [...] Within 20 working days of acknowledgement of Stage 2 complaint [...] 2.20 A full record must be kept of the complaint, any review, 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. All relevant documents and emails, including the final complaint responses, must be saved on SharePoint by the Stage 2 complaint handler.
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 1.16  Compensation and Financial Loss Policy	Investigating a Stage 1 complaint [...] Within 10 working days of acknowledgement of complaint 1.16 Following their investigation, the Stage 1 complaint handler will make a decision on whether the complaint should be upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld. We must make sure that we can remedy the complaint at Stage 1, and do not need to escalate the complaint to Stage 2 to provide an appropriate remedy.
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Managing Unacceptable and Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy	The Managing Unacceptable and Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy and its supporting procedure set out how Barnet Homes will manage such behaviour. They include a rigorous referral and review process that includes documenting evidence and regular review of any restrictions.
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Managing Unacceptable and Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy	The Managing Unacceptable and Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy and its supporting procedure and internal referral form consider the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and emphasise the need to consider vulnerabilities, where known, and ensure any restrictions on contact are proportionate and fair.
<b>Section 6: Complaints stages</b>				
<b>Stage 1</b>				
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 1.9	1. Stage 1 [...] Following acknowledgement of a Stage 1 complaint [...] 1.9 The Stage 1 complaint handler must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the complainant is vulnerable or at risk when considering how best to investigate a complaint. Some Stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly (as early as possible) and an explanation, apology, or resolution provided to the complainant, whilst other complaints may require further investigation.
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <b><u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u></b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 5.4.2.1  Complaint Handling Procedure, clauses 1.2 – 1.3	Policy: 5.4.2 Stage 1 complaints 5.4.2.1 On receiving a complaint, we expect our staff to listen and take the matter seriously. Within five working days of a complaint being received, we will acknowledge the complaint and provide the complainant with the investigating officer's contact details.  Procedure: 1. Stage 1 [...] Within 5 working days of receipt of complaint 1.2 The Complaints and Information team will review the complaint and make a decision about whether it is accepted under the Complaints and Compliments Policy, using their discretion as necessary. The Complaints and Information team (and the Housing Options team and Property Services team for those service's complaints) will ask the complainant for clarification if any aspect of the complaint is unclear, to define the complaint. [...] 1.3 If the complaint is accepted under the policy, the Complaints and Information team (and the Housing Options team and Property Services team for those services' complaints) must send an acknowledgement email or letter to the complainant.

6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <b>within 10 working days</b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 6.3	5.4.2 Stage 1 complaints [...] 5.4.2.2 We aim to resolve a complaint at the earliest possible opportunity and to fully respond to each complaint within ten working days of it being acknowledged as accepted under our complaints process.
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 5.4.2.3  Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 1.7	Policy: 5.4.2 Stage 1 complaints [...] 5.4.2.3 If, considering the complexity of the complaint, we need more time to investigate, we will let the complainant know why and how long it will take, up to a maximum of an additional 10 working days (which would be a total of 20 working days from the date the complaint was acknowledged). If an extension beyond 10 additional working days is needed to respond, we will advise why and how long it will take.  Procedure: 1. Stage 1 [...] 1.7 If it will not be possible to provide a response within the standard 10 working days – exceptional circumstances only 1.7.1 If it will not be possible to provide a response within the standard 10 working days due to the complexity of the issue, the Stage 1 complaint handler must write to the complainant to inform them of the clear timeframe for when the response will be received and explain the delay. The extension should not exceed an additional 10 working days without good reason (20 working days in total from the formal acknowledgement of the complaint). It is strongly recommended that this is communicated to the complainant within 5 working days of the complaint being assigned.
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 1.7	1. Stage 1 [...] 1.7 If it will not be possible to provide a response within the standard 10 working days – exceptional circumstances only 1.7.1 If it will not be possible to provide a response within the standard 10 working days due to the complexity of the issue, the Stage 1 complaint handler must write to the complainant to inform them of the clear timeframe for when the response will be received and explain the delay. The extension should not exceed an additional 10 working days without good reason (20 working days in total from the formal acknowledgement of the complaint). It is strongly recommended that this is communicated to the complainant within 5 working days of the complaint being assigned. [...] For landlord services complaints, if the complainant is advised about an extension, the Stage 1 complaint handler must provide the complainant with the contact details for the Housing Ombudsman. See Appendix 2 for the wording to be used when advising of an extension, including the Housing Ombudsman information for landlord services complaints.
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 1.18	1. Stage 1 [...] Within 10 working days of acknowledgement of complaint 1.18 The Stage 1 complaint handler must send a written response to a complaint, including if it is to confirm a telephone discussion about the resolution of the complaint with the complainant. The complaint response must be sent to the complainant when the answer to the complaint is known, and must not be delayed by any outstanding actions that are required to address the issue; where necessary, these must be tracked and actioned promptly following the response and appropriate updates must be provided to the complainant.

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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 1.19	<p>1. Stage 1 [...] Within 10 working days of acknowledgement of complaint [...] 1.19 The written response must address all points raised in the complaint, provide clear reasons for any decisions, and confirm the below in clear, plain language (complaint handlers must use the template in Appendix 3 to ensure all points are covered): [...] b) the complaint definition c) the decision on the complaint (including if it is upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld – addressing each key part of the complaint if multiple issues have been raised) o A complaint will be “not upheld” if, regarding all the points raised in the complaint, the investigation finds that the organisation acted correctly, or if a mistake was made but the service had already done what we would expect to put things right for those affected. o A complaint will be “partially upheld” if the investigation finds that the organisation got some things wrong, but not all the issues that were complained about. o A complaint will be “upheld” if, regarding all the points raised in the complaint, the investigation finds that the organisation made mistakes or provided a poor service that did not meet the standards a reasonable person could expect. d) the reasons for any decisions made (referencing the relevant policy, law, and/or good practice where appropriate)</p>
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 5.4.2.4	<p>5.4.2 Stage 1 complaints 5.4.2.4 If a complainant raises additional complaints during the investigation, wherever possible and at our discretion these will be incorporated into the Stage 1 response if they are relevant and if the Stage 1 response has not been issued. If the Stage 1 response has been issued or it would unreasonably delay the response, or if the matters raised are not relevant to the existing complaint, the issue will be logged as a new complaint.</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"> <li>a. the complaint stage;</li> <li>b. the complaint definition;</li> <li>c. the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>d. the reasons for any decisions made;</li> <li>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</li> <li>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</li> <li>g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure, clauses 1.18 – 1.19	<p>1. Stage 1 [...] Within 10 working days of acknowledgement of complaint [...] 1.18 The Stage 1 complaint handler must send a written response to a complaint, including if it is to confirm a telephone discussion about the resolution of the complaint with the complainant. The complaint response must be sent to the complainant when the answer to the complaint is known, and must not be delayed by any outstanding actions that are required to address the issue; where necessary, these must be tracked and actioned promptly following the response and appropriate updates must be provided to the complainant. 1.19 The written response must address all points raised in the complaint, provide clear reasons for any decisions, and confirm the below in clear, plain language (complaint handlers must use the template in Appendix 3 to ensure all points are covered): a) the complaint stage b) the complaint definition c) the decision on the complaint (including if it is upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld – addressing each key part of the complaint if multiple issues have been raised) o A complaint will be “not upheld” if, regarding all the points raised in the complaint, the investigation finds that the organisation acted correctly, or if a mistake was made but the service had already done what we would expect to put things right for those affected.</p>

				<p>o A complaint will be “partially upheld” if the investigation finds that the organisation got some things wrong, but not all the issues that were complained about.</p> <p>o A complaint will be “upheld” if, regarding all the points raised in the complaint, the investigation finds that the organisation made mistakes or provided a poor service that did not meet the standards a reasonable person could expect.</p> <p>d) the reasons for any decisions made (referencing the relevant policy, law, and/or good practice where appropriate)</p> <p>e) the details of any remedy offered to put things right. This may include details of the actions already taken to put things right and any outstanding actions (it must include what will happen and by when – in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion). (Actions may include those noted in Appendix 4 – Putting Things Right):</p> <p>f) details of how to escalate the matter to Stage 2 if the resident is not satisfied with the response (all complaint responses must include the standardised text for this (available on The Vine))</p>
Stage 2				
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 5.4.3.1	5.4.3 Requests to escalate complaints to Stage 2 5.4.3.1 If all or part of the complaint has not been resolved to the complainant’s satisfaction, the complainant may request further investigation by a different officer who will usually be more senior.
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 5.4.3.2  Complaint Handling Procedure, clauses 2.2 – 2.3	<p>Policy:</p> <p>5.4.3 Requests to escalate complaints to Stage 2 [...]</p> <p>5.4.3.2 The Barnet Group will not unreasonably deny a request for a complaint to be reviewed at Stage 2. The Complaints and Information team will consider all requests for escalation on their individual merits, and will take into account the customer’s perspective and the steps that have been taken. The team will determine if the complaint is eligible to be escalated, and will explain the decision fully in writing within five working days of the request being received.</p> <p>Procedure:</p> <p>2. Stage 2 Within 5 working days of receipt of Stage 2 complaint</p> <p>2.2 If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the complainant’s satisfaction at Stage 1, the Complaints and Information team will make the final decision as to whether a complaint will be escalated to the next stage. Complainants must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a Stage 2 consideration, but the Complaints and Information team may contact the complainant to ask for clarification if any aspect of the complaint is unclear, so the full definition of the complaint can be agreed with the complainant.</p> <p>2.3 If escalation of the complaint is agreed, the Complaints and Information team must send an acknowledgement letter or email to the complainant.</p>
6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 2.2	<p>2. Stage 2 Within 5 working days of receipt of Stage 2 complaint</p> <p>2.2 If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the complainant’s satisfaction at Stage 1, the Complaints and Information team will make the final decision as to whether a complaint will be escalated to the next stage. Complainants must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a Stage 2 consideration, but the Complaints and Information team may contact the complainant to ask for clarification if any aspect of the complaint is unclear, so the full definition of the complaint can be agreed with the complainant.</p>

6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clause 5.4.3.1</li> <li>• clauses 5.4.4.1</li> </ul>	5.4.3 Requests to escalate complaints to Stage 2 5.4.3.1 If all or part of the complaint has not been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, the complainant may request further investigation by a different officer who will usually be more senior.  5.4.4 Stage 2 complaints 5.4.4 Stage 2 complaints 5.4.4.1 An officer who has not previously been involved with the complaint investigation, and who usually is more senior, will carry out a review of the Stage 1 response. We will review the previous investigations and actions to assess whether we have met our responsibilities, and identify any additional actions that may be required to resolve the complaint.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <b>within 20 working days</b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 5.4.4.2	5.4.4 Stage 2 complaints [...] 5.4.4.2 We aim to resolve a complaint at the earliest possible opportunity and to fully respond to a Stage 2 complaint within 20 working days of acknowledging that the complaint has been escalated.
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 5.4.4.3	5.4.4 Stage 2 complaints [...] 5.4.4.3 If, considering the complexity of the complaint, we need more time to investigate we will advise why and how long it will take, up to a maximum of an additional 20 working days (which would be a total of 40 working days from the date the Stage 2 escalation was acknowledged). If an extension beyond 20 additional working days is needed to respond, we will advise why and how long it will take.
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 2.6.1	2. Stage 2 [...] 2.6 If it will not be possible to provide a response within the standard 20 working days – exceptional circumstances only 2.6.1 If it will not be possible to provide a response within the standard 20 working days due to the complexity of the issue, the Stage 2 complaint handler must write to the complainant to inform them of the clear timeframe for when the response will be received and explain the delay. The extension should not exceed an additional 20 working days without good reason (40 working days in total from the formal acknowledgement of the complaint). It is strongly recommended that this is communicated to the complaint within 5 working days of the complaint being assigned.
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 2.16	2. Stage 2 Within 20 working days of acknowledgement of Stage 2 complaint 2.16 The Stage 2 complaint handler must send a written response to the complaint, including if it is to confirm a telephone discussion about the resolution of the complaint with the complainant. The complaint response must be sent to the complainant when the answer to the complaint is known, and must not be delayed by any outstanding actions that are required to address the issue; where necessary, these must be tracked and actioned promptly following the response and appropriate updates must be provided to the complainant.
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure, clauses 2.16 - 2.17	2. Stage 2 Within 20 working days of acknowledgement of complaint [...] 2.16 The Stage 2 complaint handler must send a written response to the complaint, including if it is to confirm a telephone discussion about the resolution of the complaint with the complainant. The complaint response must be sent to the complainant when the answer to the complaint is known, and must not be delayed by any outstanding actions that are required to address the issue; where necessary, these must be tracked and actioned promptly following the response and appropriate updates must be provided to the complainant.

				2.17 The written response must address all points raised in the complaint, and confirm the following in clear, plain language (complaint handlers must use the template in Appendix 3 to ensure all points are covered): a) the complaint stage; b) the complaint definition; c) the decision on the complaint (including if it is upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld – addressing each key part of the complaint if multiple issues have been raised); d) the reasons for any decisions made (referencing the relevant policy, law, and/or good practice where appropriate);
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; 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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 2.17	2. Stage 2 Within 20 working days of acknowledgement of complaint [...] 2.17 The written response must address all points raised in the complaint, and confirm the following in clear, plain language (complaint handlers must use the template in Appendix 3 to ensure all points are covered): a) the complaint stage; b) the complaint definition; c) the decision on the complaint (including if it is upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld – addressing each key part of the complaint if multiple issues have been raised); d) the reasons for any decisions made (referencing the relevant policy, law, and/or good practice where appropriate); e) the details of any remedy offered to put things right. This may include details of the actions already taken to put things right and any outstanding actions (it must include what will happen and by when – in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion) (Actions may include those noted in Appendix 4 – Putting Things Right); and f) details of how to escalate the matter to the appropriate Ombudsman if the resident is still dissatisfied (all complaint responses must include the standardised text for this (available on The Vine)).
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 2.11	2. Stage 2 [...] Investigating a Stage 2 complaint 2.11 The Stage 2 complaint handler's complaint investigation must be conducted in an impartial manner, seeking sufficient, reliable information from both the complainant and the business so that fair and appropriate findings and recommendations can be made.
<b>Section 7: Putting things right</b>				
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;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clauses 5.4.5.1 – 5.4.5.2	5.4.5 Putting things right 5.4.5.1 Where something has gone wrong, The Barnet Group will acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. 5.4.5.2 Complaints to The Barnet Group that are upheld may be resolved in a number of ways. Any remedies that are offered will reflect the extent of any and all service failures, and the level of detriment caused to the customer as a result. These may include: • apologising; • acknowledging where things have gone wrong; • providing an explanation, assistance, or reasons; • taking action if there has been a delay; • reconsidering or changing a decision; • amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • providing a financial remedy; and/or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changing policies, procedures or practices.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>changing policies, procedures, or practices.</li> </ul>
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 5.3</p> <p>Complaint Handling Procedure, Appendix 4 – Putting Things Right</p>	<p>Policy:</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>5.3 When identifying a remedy, The Barnet Group will consider a range of factors including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the length of time that a situation has been ongoing;</li> <li>the frequency with which something has occurred;</li> <li>the severity of any service failure or omission;</li> <li>the number of different failures;</li> <li>the cumulative impact on the customer; and/or</li> <li>a customer's particular circumstances or vulnerabilities.</li> </ul> <p>Additional information included in Appendix 4 to the Complaint Handling Procedure:</p> <p>Putting things right</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the complainant as a result of any fault identified. The complaint handler must carefully manage the expectations of complainants and not promise anything that cannot be delivered or would cause unfairness to other residents.</p>
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure, Appendix 4 – Putting Things Right	<p>Appendix 4 – Putting Things Right</p> <p>If something has gone wrong, the complaint handler (on behalf of Barnet Homes) must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. This can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>apologising;</li> <li>acknowledging where things have gone wrong;</li> <li>providing an explanation, assistance, or reasons;</li> <li>taking action if there has been a delay;</li> <li>reconsidering or changing a decision;</li> <li>amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;</li> <li>providing a financial remedy;</li> <li>changing policies, procedures, or practices (note: potential changes to policies or procedures must be discussed with the relevant Head of Service and the Director of Strategy before making a commitment to a complainant. If a change is urgently needed, it will be actioned appropriately; alternatively, it may be appropriate to recommend consideration of a change when the policy is next reviewed. This must be agreed with the senior officers.)</li> </ul> <p>Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the complainant as a result of any fault identified. The complaint handler must carefully manage the expectations of complainants and not promise anything that cannot be delivered or would cause unfairness to other residents.</p> <p>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.</p>
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure, Appendix 4 – Putting Things Right	<p>Appendix 4 – Putting Things Right</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Please refer to the Compensation and Financial Loss Policy for more information and the principles that must be followed and the factors to consider – it refers to financial remedies as well as other types of remedy that may be appropriate. Complaint handlers must also take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsmen when deciding on appropriate remedies:</p> <p>Housing Ombudsman Service – Guidance on Remedies (landlord services complaints): <a href="http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/about-hos/corporate-information/policies/dispute-resolution/policy-on-remedies/">www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/about-hos/corporate-information/policies/dispute-resolution/policy-on-remedies/</a></p>

Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting, and compliance

8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.</li> <li>b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept;</li> <li>c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;</li> <li>d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;</li> <li>e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and</li> <li>f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 7.2</p> <p>Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 5.5</p>	<p>Policy: 7 MONITORING AND REVIEW [...] 7.2 Our management teams and Boards will review and scrutinise complaints and compliments performance and trends on a regular basis, as appropriate, and the Boards will receive an annual complaints performance and service improvement report along with a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's aligned Complaint Handling Code. We will report on the number, nature, and outcomes of complaints and publish these on our website at least annually.</p> <p>Procedure: 5. Monitoring performance [...] 5.5 An annual complaints performance and service improvement report will compiled by the Complaints and Information Team and will be presented to LBB's Cabinet (for Barnet Homes performance) and the Barnet Homes Homes Board as appropriate after year-end, each June. This will include: a) annual self-assessments against the Complaint Handling Code to ensure the complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements; b) a qualitative and quantitative analysis of complaints handling performance, including a summary of the types of complaints that The Barnet Group has refused to accept; c) any findings of non-compliance with the Complaint Handling Code by the Ombudsmen; d) the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; e) any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsmen; and f) any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsmen in relation to the work of The Barnet Group.</p>
8.2	<p>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.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 7.2</p> <p>Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 5.8</p>	<p>Policy: 7 MONITORING AND REVIEW [...] 7.2 Our management teams and Boards will review and scrutinise complaints and compliments performance and trends on a regular basis, as appropriate, and the Boards will receive an annual complaints performance and service improvement report along with a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's aligned Complaint Handling Code. We will report on the number, nature, and outcomes of complaints and publish these on our website at least annually.</p> <p>Procedure: 5. Monitoring performance [...] 5.8 The annual complaints performance and service improvement report and the Complaints Handling Code self-assessment will be published on the Barnet Homes website on the complaints page. The Cabinet's response to the report will also be published alongside this.</p>

8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 5.7	5. Monitoring performance [...] 5.7 A self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code will additionally be completed following any significant restructure and/or change in procedures.
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes		Barnet Homes would comply with any orders from the Housing Ombudsman to review and update its self-assessment.
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes		Barnet Homes understands this requirement and would take the required steps to ensure those affected and the Housing Ombudsman were updated as part of its business / service continuity plans.
<b>Section 8: Scrutiny and oversight: continuous learning and improvement</b>				
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaint Handling Procedure, Appendix 4 – Putting Things Right	Appendix 4 – Putting Things Right [...] The complaint handler 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.
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clause 3.1</li> <li>• clause 5.6.1</li> </ul>	3 POLICY STATEMENT 3.1 We are committed to continuously improving what we do and the way we do it as a result of feedback from our customers or those affected by our services. This policy is intended to enable a positive complaints culture across our organisation, and to assist us to listen to and learn from our customers so we can address any service failures and put things right when they have gone wrong, identify areas for improvement or areas of good practice, and monitor services in a customer-focused way.  5.6 Learning from complaints 5.6.1 We are committed to learning from complaints and using complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service design and delivery and the customer experience. We will record and monitor every complaint, including what it was about, how it was resolved, how quickly it was resolved, and what we learnt, and we will regularly review this to understand how we can improve our handling of complaints and/or the services we provide. When something changes as a result of a complaint, we will inform the complainant of what has been changed.
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 7.2  Complaint Handling Procedure, clauses 5.2 – 5.4	Policy: 7 MONITORING AND REVIEW [...] 7.2 Our management teams and Boards will review and scrutinise complaints and compliments performance and trends on a regular basis, as appropriate, and the Boards will receive an annual complaints performance and service improvement report along with a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's aligned Complaint Handling Code. We will report on the number, nature, and outcomes of complaints and publish these on our website at least annually.  Procedure: 5. Monitoring performance [...] 5.2 The Complaints and Information Team will review complaints handling performance on a monthly and quarterly basis. It will provide updates to Heads of Service including provision of an

				<p>early warning where there are concerns about the impact of the monthly performance upon the quarterly or annual performance.</p> <p>5.3 Service managers will undertake regular, and at least quarterly, reviews of lessons learnt and trends with the support of the Complaints and Information team. Heads of Service will undertake at least quarterly reviews of lessons learnt and trends.</p> <p>5.4 Formal complaints performance reports will be provided to the Senior Management Team, the Board, and resident scrutiny groups (as agreed) on a quarterly and annual basis or as requested. Regular reports will also be provided to LBB's Cabinet regarding Barnet Homes performance. Reporting is based on summarised performance, although individual anonymised case studies may be presented where necessary. Information regularly presented will include complaints numbers, categories, outcomes, handling performance, and regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling. The Board (and Cabinet) will also receive regular updates on the outcomes of Ombudsman investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to findings of severe maladministration.</p>
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 4.2	<p>4 RESPONSIBILITIES</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>4.2 The Executive Management Team has overall responsibility for this policy. The Director of Strategy has overall accountability for complaint handling and will work with the Senior Management Team and Complaints and Information Team to ensure any themes or trends are assessed to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.</p>
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').	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<p>Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 4.1</p> <p>Complaints page on website:  <a href="http://thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us/complaints">thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us/complaints</a></p>	<p>4 RESPONSIBILITIES</p> <p>4.1 The Barnet Homes [...] Boards have overall responsibility for ensuring that The Barnet Group meets its statutory and regulatory requirements, and will review and scrutinise complaint handling performance, outcomes, and issues and trends arising from complaints. The [...] MRC [...] has lead responsibility [...] for complaints, to support a positive complaint handling culture. They are responsible for ensuring the board receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on [...] complaint handling performance. An MRC is appointed within the London Borough of Barnet for complaints regarding Barnet Homes.</p> <p>The London Borough of Barnet is in the process of updating the Council Constitution's Terms of Reference for the Cabinet Member for Homes and Regeneration as follows:  Council Constitution, Article 2D and 2E, Terms of Reference of Cabinet and Cabinet Members, the Cabinet Member for Homes and Regeneration has responsibility:  “To act as the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) in line with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Service's Complaint Handling Code.”</p> <p>On the Barnet Homes website on the complaints page, the section about the Housing Ombudsman and the Complaint Handling Code includes information about the MRC:</p> <p><i>Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Complaint-Handling Code</i></p> <p>Complaints about landlord services</p> <p>Barnet Homes is required to handle complaints about its social housing landlord services in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, which you can read on its website.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>The Complaint Handling Code requires the landlord, the London Borough of Barnet, to appoint a Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC). Their role is to make sure that complaint handling drives learning and service improvement for residents, and to champion a positive complaint</p>

				handling culture. They have lead responsibility for making sure the governing body receives regular updates on complaints and complaint handling performance. The London Borough of Barnet's MRC is Councillor Ross Houston, Cabinet Member for Homes and Regeneration.
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 4.1  Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 5.6	<p>Policy:</p> <p><b>4 RESPONSIBILITIES</b></p> <p>4.1 The Barnet Homes [...] Boards have overall responsibility for ensuring that The Barnet Group meets its statutory and regulatory requirements, and will review and scrutinise complaint handling performance, outcomes, and issues and trends arising from complaints. The [...] MRC [...] has lead responsibility [...] for complaints, to support a positive complaint handling culture. They are responsible for ensuring the board receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on [...] complaint handling performance. An MRC is appointed within the London Borough of Barnet for complaints regarding Barnet Homes.</p> <p>Procedure:</p> <p>5. Monitoring performance [...]</p> <p>5.6 The Members Responsible for Complaints (MRC) appointed within LBB for Barnet Homes will have access to suitable information and staff to perform their role and report on their findings.</p>
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;</li> <li>b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;</li> <li>c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and</li> <li>d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Complaints and Compliments Policy, clause 4.1  Complaint Handling Procedure, clause 5.4	<p>Policy:</p> <p><b>4 RESPONSIBILITIES</b></p> <p>4.1 The Barnet Homes [...] Boards have overall responsibility for ensuring that The Barnet Group meets its statutory and regulatory requirements, and will review and scrutinise complaint handling performance, outcomes, and issues and trends arising from complaints. The [...] MRC [...] has lead responsibility [...] for complaints, to support a positive complaint handling culture. They are responsible for ensuring the board receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on [...] complaint handling performance. An MRC is appointed within the London Borough of Barnet for complaints regarding Barnet Homes.</p> <p>Procedure:</p> <p>5. Monitoring performance [...]</p> <p>5.4 Formal complaints performance reports will be provided to the Senior Management Team, the Board, and resident scrutiny groups (as agreed) on a quarterly and annual basis or as requested. Regular reports will also be provided to LBB's Cabinet regarding Barnet Homes performance. Reporting is based on summarised performance, although individual anonymised case studies may be presented where necessary. Information regularly presented will include complaints numbers, categories, outcomes, handling performance, and regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling. The Board (and Cabinet) will also receive regular updates on the outcomes of Ombudsman investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to findings of severe maladministration.</p> <p>5.5 An annual complaints performance and service improvement report will compiled by the Complaints and Information Team and will be presented to LBB's Cabinet (for Barnet Homes performance) and the Barnet Homes Board as appropriate after year-end, each June. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) annual self-assessments against the Complaint Handling Code to ensure the complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements;</li> <li>b) a qualitative and quantitative analysis of complaints handling performance, including a summary of the types of complaints that The Barnet Group has refused to accept;</li> <li>c) any findings of non-compliance with the Complaint Handling Code by the Ombudsmen;</li> <li>d) the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;</li> <li>e) any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsmen; and</li> </ul>

				f) any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsmen in relation to the work of The Barnet Group.
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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</li> <li>b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and</li> <li>c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes		A standard objective in relation to complaint handling and in line with the Complaint Handling Code that applies to all relevant employees was agreed by the Executive Management Team in February 2024 and is being rolled out: