#### **Appendix A: Self-assessment form**

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

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

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

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

#### **Section 1: Definition of a complaint**

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	A complaint must be defined as:  '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.'	Yes	Complaints Policy	This definition is used in our policy (point 2.1).
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.	Yes	Complaints Policy	As per the definition there is no requirement for residents to use the word complaint.  Our policy makes it clear we accept complaints via a third party.(point 4.1).
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	Yes	Complaints Policy	This is covered by point 2.2 in our complaint definitions. Service requests are recorded through our CRM system.

1.5	recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.  A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	Complaints Policy	This is also explained under point 2.2 of the policy.
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.	Yes	This is included on the closing page for online satisfaction surveys. It is also in the telephone interviewers' script.	An explanation and link is included at the end of online surveys for respondents to provide further feedback or make a complaint.  At the end of telephone surveys, interviewers provide details of how to make a complaint.

#### **Section 2: Exclusions**

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	Complaints Policy	Exclusions are listed under 3.1 of the policy. It is explained that all complaints will be considered by its own merits.
	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:			
2.2	The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.	Yes	Complaints Policy	Exclusions are listed at 3.1 of the policy.
	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.			

	<ul> <li>Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.</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.	Yes	Complaints Policy	This is explained under 2.3 of the policy.
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.	Yes	Complaints Policy	This is explained under 3.2 of the policy.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Complaints Policy	3.1 of the Complaints Policy explains that each case will be considered under its own merit.

## **Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness**

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	Complaints Policy	4.1 of the Policy explains that complaints will be accepted by all channels. 4.6 of the Policy is titled "Helping with complaints" and provides information about how reasonable adjustments will be made.
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	Complaints Policy and Customer Experience team guide	We do not place restrictions on how or to whom a customer can complain. The complaint policy is accessible to staff through our central knowledge base and our customer support team have had additional complaints training. Our CX team guide clearly shows who people can talk to if they have any queries about complaints.
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and	Yes	Annual Complaints report	Saxon Weald report the Housing Regulator TSMs on a monthly basis. One of

	accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.			these measures is "Number of complaints per thousand properties". We use HouseMark to benchmark our results against the sector.
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.	Yes	Complaints Policy, and Easy read guide, Saxon Weald website	Complaints policy, and guides are in the Complaints section on Saxon Weald website. Paper copies of these documents are also available on site at schemes. Paper copies are also be posted upon request.
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	Complaints Policy	Section 4.2 provides detail to how the Complaint policy is publicised. 4.13 Provides detail about the Housing Ombudsman.
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	Complaints Policy	This is covered under 4.6. "Helping with complaints"
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the	Yes	Complaints Policy and Complaints guide	4.13 of the policy provides contact details for the Ombudsman. There is

indiv	ividual can engage with the		further information about the
Oml	nbudsman about their complaint.		Housing Ombudsman
	·		provided in our guides.

#### **Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff**

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes	Complaint handling objective in job profiles for the Customer Experience team.	Customer Experience hold overall responsibility for the Complaint process.
4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	Yes	Complaints Policy	Stage one complaints are handled by relevant service managers. Stage two complaints are escalated to Customer Experience team for them to handle.

4.3 co lea sta im im co	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively	Yes	Complaints Policy and training resources	4.1 of the policy explains Complaint handlers are provided with training.
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# **Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process**

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	Complaints Policy	There is only one policy in place.
5.2	The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.	Yes	Complaints Policy	There is no stage zero or informal complaint stage.
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the	Yes	Complaints Policy	There are only two stages as outlined in 4.9 of the policy.

	complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.			
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.	Yes	Complaint Policy	All complaints are handled by Saxon Weald.
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	n/a	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 definition". If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	Yes	Complaint acknowledgement	At acknowledgment stage Saxon Weald will confirm with complainants what the complaint concerns and the desired outcome.
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	Complaint acknowledgement	Complaint acknowledgements would establish if any element of the complaint could not be considered in our response and an explanation given.

5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:  a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;  b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position;  c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and  d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.	Yes	Complaints Policy	a) Complaints are handled by a manager who has had no prior involvement in any issues raised in the complaint. b) The complaint investigation enables complainants this opportunity c) Complaints can be reassigned where required d) Complainants are invited to provide additional information to consider as part of their complaints.
5.9	fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for	Yes	Complaints Policy	extensions are handled as part of the complaint investigation.

	keeping them informed about their complaint.			
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	Yes	Complaints Policy	4.6 of our policy covers how we handle reasonable adjustments.
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.	Yes	Complaints Policy	3.0 explains reasons for exclusion from the complaint process.
5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.	Yes	Our CRM system	Complaints are raised on our CRM system with cases updated as the investigation progresses.
5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints	Yes	Complaints Policy	Managers investigating complaints are empowered to take decisions that will

	process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.			provide appropriate remedies at both stages of the complaint process.
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	Yes	Complaints policy and Unreasonable behaviour policy	Point 6 of the complaint policy explains how the unreasonable behaviour policy will be used.
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	Complaints policy and Unreasonable behaviour policy	Both policies have a section specifically titled Equality and diversity.

## **Section 6: Complaints Stages**

## Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at	Yes	Complaints Policy	4.9.1 of the policy explains the aim is for as many complaints as possible be resolved at stage one.

	risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.			
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the complaint being received.	Yes	Complaints Policy	Our policy reflects these timescales under point 4.9.1.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Complaints Policy	Our policy reflects these timescales under point 4.9.1.
6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Complaints Policy	Our policy reflects these timescales under point 4.9.2.
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Complaints Policy	This is covered under 4.9.2 of the policy.
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	Yes	Complaints Policy	This is covered under 4.9.4 of the policy.

	the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.			
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Complaint acknowledgement and responses	Communications during complaint investigation ensure all points are addressed.
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	Complaints Policy	This is covered under 4.9.3 of the policy.
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 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;	Yes	Complaint responses	Templates have been provided for managers to ensure they include these details in their responses.

f. details of any outstanding		
actions; and		
g. details of how to escalate the		
matter to stage 2 if the individual is		
not satisfied with the response.		

## Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	Complaints Policy	This is covered under 4.9.5 of the policy.
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	Complaints Policy	This is covered under 4.9.5 of the policy.
6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	Complaints Policy	There is no requisite for complainants to tell us why they wish to have their complaint escalated.
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Complaints Policy	Stage two complaints are handled by the Customer Experience team as per point 4.9.5 of the policy.

6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Complaints Policy	This is covered under 4.9.5 of the policy.
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Complaints Policy	This is covered under 4.9.6 of the policy.
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Complaints Policy	This is covered under 4.9.6 of the policy.
6.17	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Complaints Policy	Stage two responses and outstanding actions are handled in the same way that stage one complaints are.
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Complaint acknowledgement and responses	Communications during complaint investigation ensure all points are addressed.

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.	Yes	Complaint responses	Templates have been provided for staff to use when responding to complaints.
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	Complaints policy	This is covered under 4.9.5 of the policy.

# **Section 7: Putting things right**

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right.  These can include:  Apologising;	Yes	Complaints Policy	This is covered under 5.1 of the policy.

	<ul> <li>Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;</li> <li>Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;</li> <li>Taking action if there has been delay;</li> <li>Reconsidering or changing a decision;</li> <li>Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;</li> <li>Providing a financial remedy;</li> <li>Changing policies, procedures or practices.</li> </ul>			
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Complaints Policy	This is covered under 5.2 of the policy.
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	Complaints Policy	This is covered under 5.1 of the policy
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	Complaints Policy and Compensation and payments policy	Both the Housing Ombudsman Remedies Policy and Remedies guidance were considered when the Compensation and payments policy was reviewed in February 2024.

## Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:  a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.  b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept;  c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;  d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;  e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and  f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.	Yes	Annual Complaints report	Report covers the requirements outlined.

8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes	Annual Complaints report	Report is presented to the Customer Experience Committee and published on our website
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self- assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	N/A	Not applicable	
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	N/A	Not applicable	Housing Ombudsman has not asked Saxon Weald to do this.
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.	N/A	Self-assessment form	This has not been necessary

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	Complaints Policy and Complaint learning tracker	This is covered under sections 4.1 and 7 of the policy. The tracker is used to record learning recommendations and their progress.
9.2	A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	Yes	Complaints Policy and Complaint learning tracker	This is covered under sections 4.1 and 7 of the policy. The tracker is used to record learning recommendations and their progress.
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	Yes	Customer newsletter/website / annual report	Examples of learning from complaints are included in our customer newsletter, annual report and also uploaded to the Your voice section of our website.
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	Yes	Customer Experience team	Customer Experience Manager produces quarterly reports which identifies

	identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.			themes and trends for complaints.
9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').	Yes	MRC as board member	Susan Morris is our Member responsible for complaints.
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Yes	MRC as board member	Susan receives quarterly reporting regarding complaints handling.
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:  a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;  b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;  c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's	Yes	MRC as board member	MRC and the board receive quarterly and annual complaints reporting. In addition the MRC is issued with all Housing Ombudsman outcome reports and the associated learning reports produced by the Customer Experience team.

investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.  Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint			
handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:  a. have a collaborative and co- operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;  b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and  c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.	Yes	Staff objectives	Customer Experience, Complaint investigating managers, and the Leadership team all have a complaint related objective as prescribed.