

COMPLAINT AND FEEDBACK (RESIDENT & HOUSING SERVICES)

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DATE CREATED	01/04/2024
REVIEW DATE	10/06/2027
APPROVED BY STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT TEAM & BOARD	10/06/2024



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1. Introduction

1.1. Our approach to managing complaints reflect the expectation of Housing Ombudsman's [Complaint Handling Code 2024](#). Throughout the process, we will remind the resident of their rights to approach the [Housing Ombudsman](#) directly at any stages of complaints to seek further advice or guidance.

1.2 Our overarching complaint handling standards ensure that all relevant staff or third parties Involved in the complaint handling reflects the needs to:

- have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;
- take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and
- act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.

1.3. This policy applies to all Your Place service users including anyone who has applied to use, or is already using, our housing and support services. This policy also applies to members of the public if they have been affected by a decision that we have made or something that we have done or not done is centered on housing and concerns within Your Place.

1.4. We welcome and will use complaints, as well as Feedback (or also known as compliments) and comments, as an opportunity to listen to what our resident say is important to them, and to improve our services



2. Definitions

We follow the guidelines of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code 2024, which emphasises distinguishing between a *service request* and *complaint*.

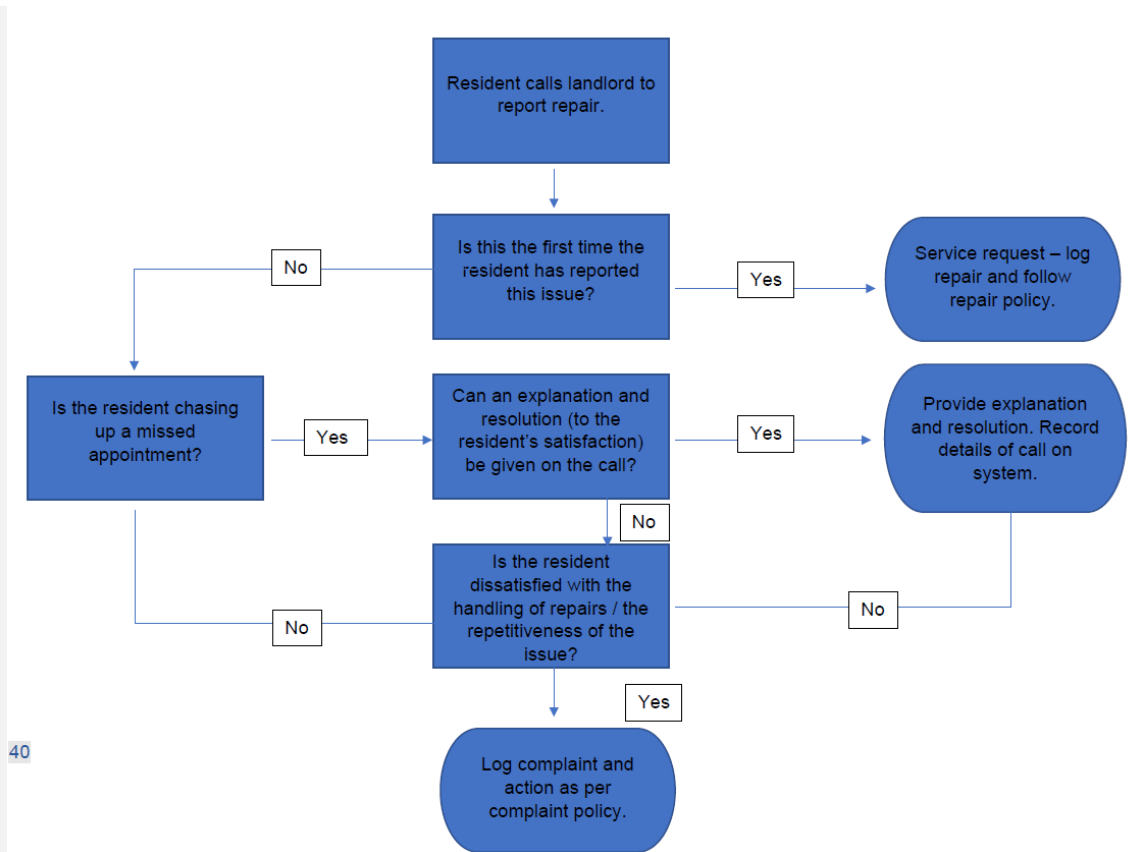
- 2.1. **Complaint** - is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions of lack of action by the organisation, its own staff or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual customer or group of customers. Anyone can submit a complaint. All complaints, including complaints by third party or representative will be handled in line with this policy.
- 2.2. **Service request** - is a request from a resident asking us to take action to put something right. We record and monitor service requests in our case management system and will raise a complaint if the complainant is dissatisfied with our response.

Example 1 (Service Request) - *When a resident contacts Your Place regarding a noisy neighbour, we'll handle it as a service request. We'll assist the resident in reporting it as antisocial behaviour and provide guidance on the necessary steps to resolve the issue. Please note that this will not be recorded or managed as a complaint.*

Example 2 (Complaint) - *If a resident contacts us to express dissatisfaction with our handling of reported antisocial behaviour despite multiple requests, we would treat it as a formal complaint. This is because it concerns our effectiveness in addressing the issues, and it will be recorded and managed accordingly alongside the antisocial behaviour case.*

Figure 1 - Complaint vs Service Request (Source: Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024, P40)





2.3. **Feedback** – is defined as information provided that lets us know when we've done something well; a compliment about our services or colleagues; a suggestion about how we could improve a service, procedure or process; or constructive criticism that the customer may not wish to formalise as a complaint.

3. Complaints

3.1. We will accept complaints as defined above, relating to incidents or issues that have occurred within the past 12 months and which involve:

- Failure to deliver a service or meet standards related to support and accommodation.
- Behaviour of staff, volunteers, or contractors working on behalf of Your Place.
- Disagreements with decisions made by us that the complainant feels are unfair.
- Poor quality of repairs and/or maintenance.
- Delay in responding to inquiries and requests.

3.2. When a resident expresses dissatisfaction in a survey response, we will ask if they wish to file a formal complaint or resolve the issue directly. If the survey is anonymous, we will provide information on how to submit a formal complaint through an information leaflet.

3.3. The following matters will not be considered as a complaint covered in this document:

- The issue giving rise to the complaint happened more than 12 months ago.
- 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.



- A request for a service (see definition of service request (2.2))
- Raising a safeguarding concern (Refer to our Safeguarding policy)
- Complaint made by employee (Refer to our Grievance Policy)
- Appeals against warnings, notices to quit, or evictions (Refer to our Warning and Exclusion Policy).
- Complaints relating to other organisation (unless they are one of our contractors working on our behalf).
- Complaints relating to our other functions that are not directly affected residents or housing.

3.4. We won't universally reject complaints; each will be evaluated based on its unique circumstances. We'll assess whether to exercise discretion in accepting complaints made outside the time limit if there are valid reasons to do so.

3.5 If we decide not to accept a complaint, we will provide an explanation to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process. We will advise resident of their right to approach Housing Ombudsman to review our decision.

4. Access to our complaint and feedback process

4.1. We will make every reasonable effort to inform residents of their right to make complaints and how to do so. The Resident Service Manager will act as lead Complaint Officer and will oversee:

- Handling complaints and coordinating responses/remedies.
- Ensuring complaints receive appropriate attention by the relevant team.
- Reporting complaint performance and trends to our Board (Joint work with the Impact Team)

4.2. The Director of Frontline Services will act as lead SMT Complaint Officer, and will be the key person to report to the board of trustee.

4.3. The Director of Frontline Services and Resident Service Manager will have access to staff at all levels to allow prompt resolution of complaints, and provided authority, and autonomy to resolve dispute fairly and promptly, which may include but not limited to:

- Calling a complaints case meeting.
- Escalating Issues for ownership.
- Challenging statements or findings.

4.4. Residents are informed about our complaints service through:

- Posters and leaflets in services.
- Induction procedures.
- Our website.

4.5. Complaint and feedback can be lodged via various channels, including:

- Directly to their keyworker, service staff, or any member of staff by phone or in person
- Phone: 020 7476 6062 during office hours (Mon-Friday, 09:00 - 17:00).
- Email tell-us@your-place.org.uk
- Online Feedback form / QR Code available across the building and communal area

4.6. We provide interpreter support if needed and provide complaint-related information to meet individual needs, including translated languages commonly spoken by our residents, large prints formats or face-to-face help for people who can't use the internet or phone.

4.7. Residents have the right to appoint a representative to handle their complaint on their behalf and can be accompanied by a representative at any meeting with us.



5. Complaint Handling

5.1. All complaint handling staff are trained to handle complaint and to:

- Act with empathy towards potentially distressed residents.
- Act sensitively and fairly
- Deal with complaints on their merit, act Independently, and have an open mind
- give the resident a fair chance to set out their position
- take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of Interest
- considered all relevant Information and evidence carefully

5.2. The complaint officer supports employees and managers in handling complaints, ensuring a coordinated response at all levels to swiftly resolve disputes.

5.3. Our focus is on early and local resolution wherever possible. There will be occasion when action can be agreed with a resident and taken immediately to resolve a problem. These actions must be recorded on In-Form as "Early resolution" (Formerly referenced as "Informal Complaint" [See In-form complaint outcome]. However, where the Issue Is more complex (i.e. requires more than one action), we will ensure that the complaint process does not delay the action being stated.

5.4 We operate a two-stage complaints process in accordance with the requirements set by the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024, enabling residents to address concerns at Stage 1 and escalate to Stage 2 if they are not satisfied with the outcome.

5.5 When a complaint is made, we will log It at Stage 1 of the process. We acknowledge it within five working days of receipt. The Day 1 will start on the next working day of the complaint being acknowledged.

5.6. The Complaint acknowledgment includes:

- Our understanding of the complaint and the desired outcome.
- Clarification requests if necessary.
- Explanation of what the resident can realistically expect.
- Right to representation and accompaniment during meetings.
- Right to approach the [Housing Ombudsman](#) for advice/guidance.
- Urgent actions taken immediately, if applicable.
- Link to our complaint policy published in our website.

5.7. The Resident Service Manager will appoint a manager to lead the investigation, also responsible to provide a regular update on progress are provided to the resident as per agreed times/dates.

5.8. The Resident Service Manager will ensure that residents are given a fair chance to set out their position and comment on any findings from the investigation before a final decision is made.

5.9. The Investigation manager must have read and confirm they fully understood Your Place Complaints & Feedback Policy and adhere to the principles and standards throughout.

5.10 We will keep a full record of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage, including 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.



6. Stage 1

6.1. We acknowledge and log complaints in our case management system within 5 working days of receipt. We will respond to the complaint **within 10 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged.

6.2. The process begins on the next working day after acknowledging the complaint to accommodate submissions received late in the afternoon, outside of office hours, or on Bank Holidays.

6.3. If we **can't** respond within **10 working days** due to factors such as the complexity of the complaint or the unavailability of key staff, we will contact the resident to agree on an extension. Extensions will not exceed 10 working days. If an extension cannot be agreed upon, the resident will be advised to contact the [Housing Ombudsman](#) for support in challenging the proposed timeline.

6.4. Extensions can only be granted by the Director of Frontline Services or one of the frontline leadership team members (Head of Support Services, Resident Housing Manager, and Facility Manager) not involved in Stage 1 to avoid conflicts of interest. All extensions must be recorded, including the reason, extension date, and complainant's agreement.

6.5. We reserve the right to consider previous reports if the complaint is a recurring issue.

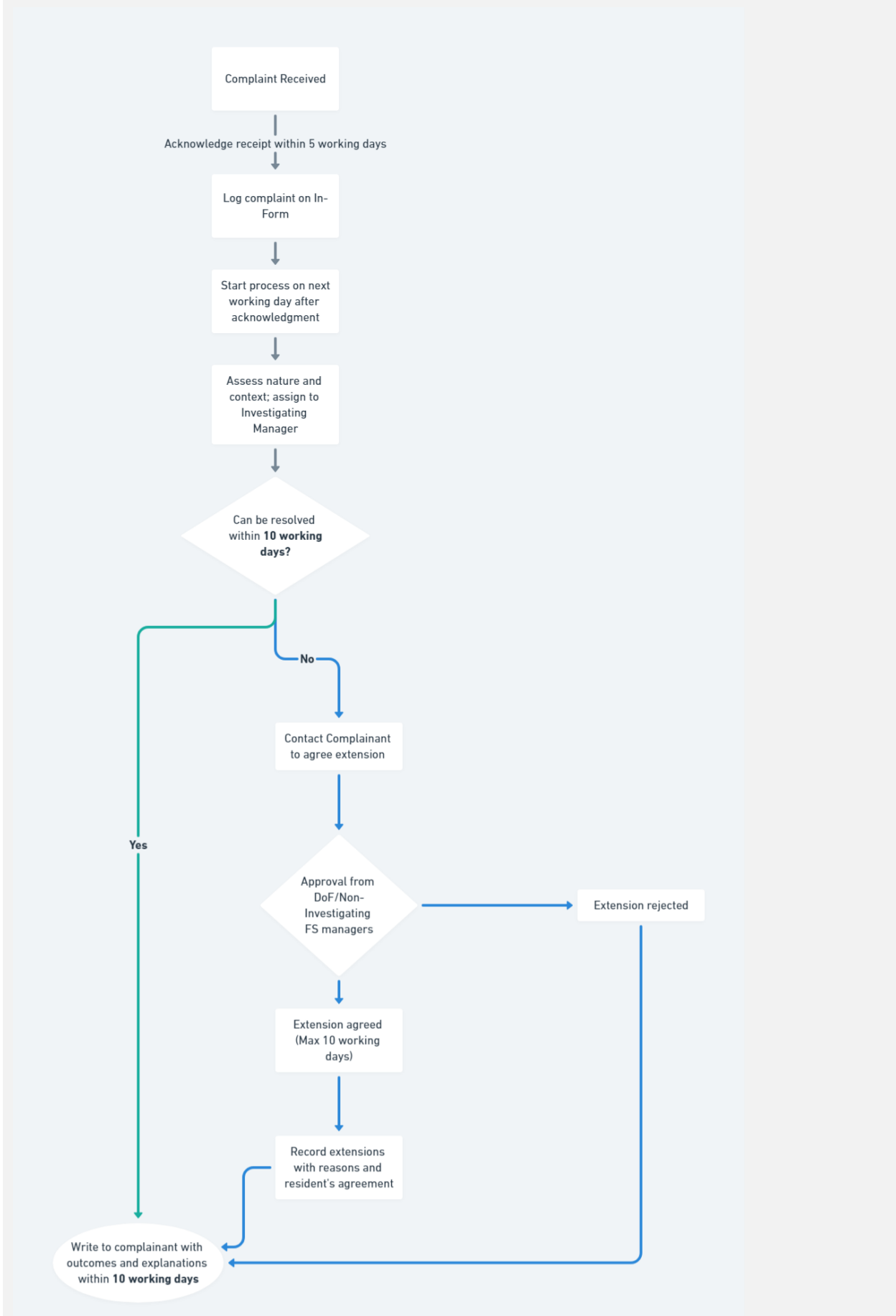
6.6. Additional complaints or issues raised during the investigation will be added to the Stage 1 Complaint, unless they are new Issues that are unrelated to the Issues already being Investigated, or It would cause unreasonable delays, in which case they will be raised as new complaints

6.7. At the end of Stage 1, we will write to the complainant to set out the following 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 stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response, and housing ombudsman contact details.



Figure 2 Stage 1 Complaint Process



7. Stage 2

7.1. If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the response at Stage 1, they can request escalation to Stage 2 (The Landlord's Final Response) within 15 working days of the date of Stage 1 outcome letter. If there are no valid reason for the appeal or grounds for the appeal, we may decide not to escalate the complaint at stage 2, but will make every effort to support the complainant. A decision not to escalate must be authorised by Director of Frontline Services, or in their absence the CEO.

7.2. Stage 2 complaints will be handled by a different complaint officer than Stage 1.

7.3. A request for Stage 2 will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.

7.4 Day 1 of the process starts on the next working day after acknowledging the complaint, accommodating submissions received late in the day or outside of office hours and Bank Holidays.

7.5 We will respond to Stage 2 complaints within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.

7.6 If we can't respond within 20 working days deadline due to factors such as the complexity of the complaint or the unavailability of key staff, we will contact the resident to agree on an extension. Extensions will not exceed 20 working days. Contact details of Housing Ombudsman will be provided in this extension letter.

7.7. Only the Director of Frontline Services or another frontline leader not involved in Stage 2 can grant extensions to the deadline, to avoid conflicts of interest.

7.8. If agreement on the extension isn't possible, we'll inform the complainant of their right to seek support from the [Housing Ombudsman](#) for support in challenging the proposed timeline.

7.9. All extensions must be recorded along with the reason, extension date and complainant's agreement.

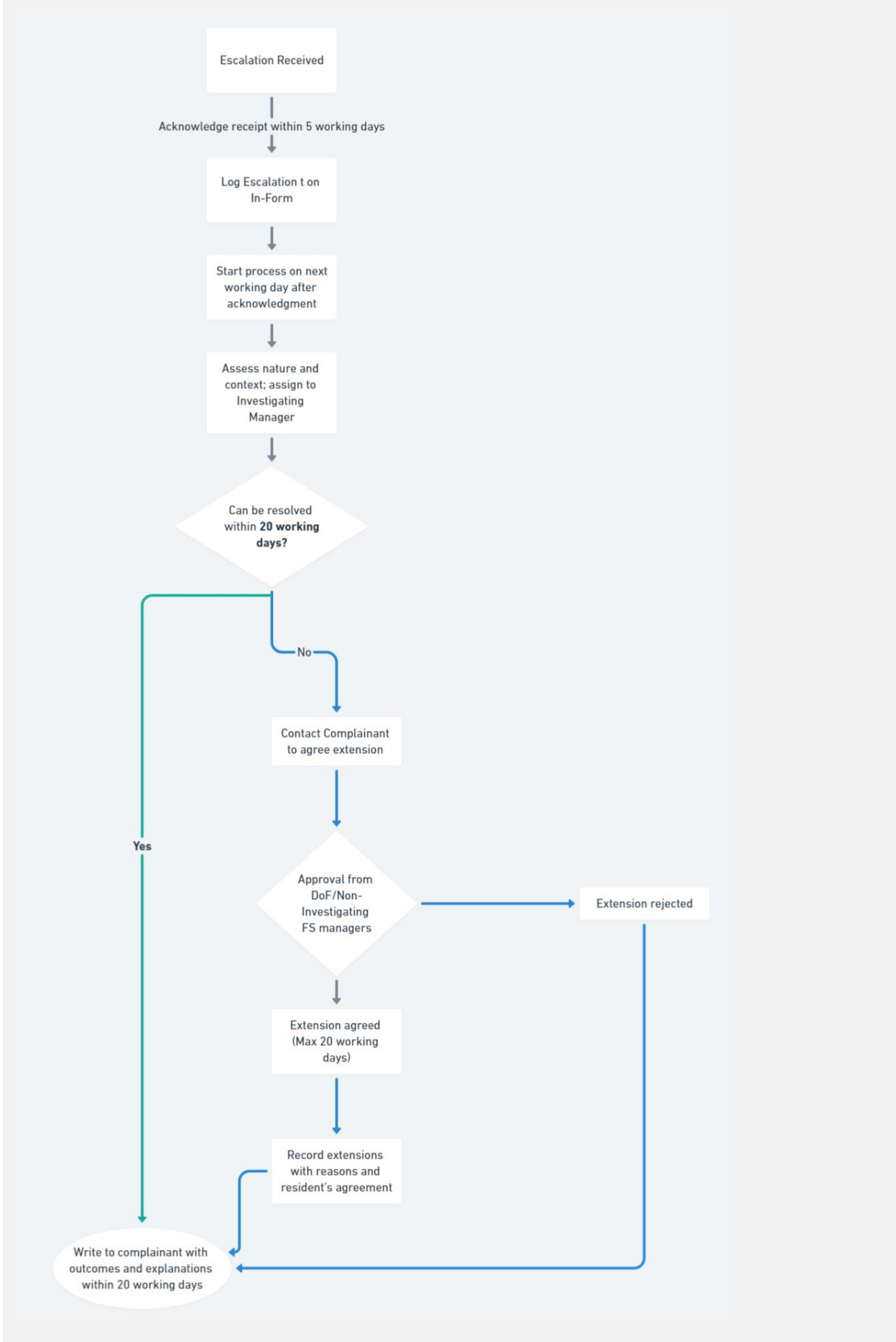
7.10 At the end of Stage 2, we will write to the complainant to set out the following in clear, plain language:

- 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.

7.11 We will respond to the complainant when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions will be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates by the lead manager to the resident.



Figure 3 Stage 2 Complaint Process



8. Complaint Decision and Remedy

8.1 Our aim is to handle most complaints at Stage 1. Occasionally, a complaint may be fully or partially upheld. We use the following descriptions to determine the outcome of each stage of the complaint process.

Decision	Description
Upheld	The complaint was fully justified, any form of remedy or redress should be offered to the complainant. The Compensation Policy should be used to decide what, if any, form of remedy or redress should be offered to the complainant.
Partially Upheld	Some aspects of the complaint are accepted, while others are not.
Not Upheld	The complaint is not accepted. This might happen where it is found, following investigation, that the complaint has no ground.

8.2. For each complaint outcome:

- If the complaint is not upheld, the investigating manager should evaluate its impact and potential risks to the complainant. They should also decide on the best way to communicate the outcomes before sending the formal response.
- If the complaint is partially or fully upheld, there may be ongoing actions required for resolution. The investigating manager must collaborate with the relevant manager to ensure completion and communicate progress to the complainant outside of the formal complaint process.

8.3. Some actions to put things right will require a commitment to a longer-term action (e.g. significant plant replacement e.g. boiler and lifts), in such case:

- a) Ensure that the complaint response aligns with policy timeframes.
- b) The investigating manager should clearly outline and confirm actions and deadlines for resolution. Assign a lead to oversee long-term actions and communicate with the complainant.

8.4. The complaint officer will identify the appropriate remedy provided and this must consider guidance from the [Housing Ombudsman](#) and reflect the impact of identified faults on the resident.

9. Unacceptable and Unreasonable complaint behaviour

9.1 We are following [Housing Ombudsman](#) and [Local Government](#) definition of unacceptable complaint behaviour and unreasonably persistent complaint behaviour.

9.2 We define unreasonably persistent complaint behaviour as *"characterised by someone trying to dominate our attention with frequent, lengthy contacts and repetitive information."*

9.3. We define Unacceptable Behaviour as *"deceitful, abusive, threatening or similar actions that adversely affect the capacity and wellbeing of staff."*

9.4 We may place a restriction on contact due to such behaviour proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provision of the Equality Act 2010 in accordance to Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.



10. Scrutiny & Oversight: Continuous learning and Improvement

10.1 The Resident Service Team will be responsible for day-to-day monitoring of complaints' performance and policy compliance.

10.2 The Resident Service Manager and Director of Frontline Services will work with relevant departments to ensure high-quality case management, adherence to procedural deadlines, thorough investigations, and effective communication.

10.3 The Head of Compliance will conduct bi-annual spot checks to evaluate the organisation's process compliance. They will then collaborate with managers and the complaint officer to develop improvement plans based on their findings.

10.4 The Impact and Performance team will conduct quarterly reviews of complaints-related performance. They will analyse qualitative and quantitative data to identify trends, themes, and potential systemic issues. This insight will inform the assessment of trends, identification of systemic issues, serious risks, and the revision of policies and procedures as necessary by the Director of Frontline Services.

10.5 Insights and lessons learned from complaints will be shared regularly with stakeholders, including but not limited to residents (via meetings and briefings), staff (via newsletters), and relevant board sub-committees and Senior Management team (via quarterly report) to facilitate ongoing learning and improvement.

10.6 Reports to the Senior Management Team and Board will encompass both complaints and feedback.

10.7 We will produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report alongside the Board's responses to the report, which include:

- the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.
- a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This includes a summary of the types of complaints we have refused to accept;
- any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;
- the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;
- any annual report about the Your Place's performance from the Ombudsman; and
- any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of Your Place.

11. Governance

11.1. A member of the governing body (also known as Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) is designated to oversee complaints and foster a positive complaint handling culture. This individual will be the chair of the Frontline Services Sub-Committee.

11.2. The MRC will receive, at minimum:

- Regular updates on the volume, categories, and outcomes of complaints, along with complaint handling performance.



- Periodic reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling.
- Ongoing updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings.
- An annual report on complaints performance and service improvement.

12. Related Policies/Procedures

Grievance

Exclusion and Warning

Safeguarding

Unreasonable behaviour

Anti-Social Behaviour

Reasonable Adjustment

Compensation policy

13. Relevant Legislations and Regulatory Requirements

[Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024](#)

