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*Complaints:  
CIH charter for housing*



**HouseMark**

Performance Improvement

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## What are we signing up to?

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### Core commitment

#### We can demonstrate that:

**Our positive and flexible approach to complaints is embedded throughout our organisation**

- Our approach to complaints handling is reflected by our values, aims and objectives
- We adopt the principle that all expressions of dissatisfaction should be taken seriously and acted on appropriately
- We have a positive approach to complaints and they are welcomed as part of our wider approach to collecting customer feedback
- We are committed to dealing with complaints in a fair, impartial and timely manner
- We are committed to using complaints to review and improve the services we provide and to shape our business
- We recognise the importance of complaints and allocate the appropriate level of resources to ensure we can deal with and resolve them effectively

**Our complaints service is open and accessible to all**

- Any of our customers wishing to make a complaint can do so freely in an easy and simple way, using a range of different methods
- We ensure that information about our complaints service, and relevant support or advocacy services, is promoted, easy to understand and can be accessed by all of our customers
- We use information about our customers to help us shape and develop a fair and accessible complaints service
- All our staff will take ownership of a complaint and either seek to resolve it or pass it on to a relevant person
- Our customers are confident that complaints are welcomed, treated seriously and will be dealt with in confidence

**We deliver a quality complaints service**

- We have clear processes and service standards in place so that customers know what to expect from our service. We regularly review these with customers to ensure that they continue to meet their needs
- We keep the number of stages in our complaints process to a minimum and focus on resolving complaints at the first stage wherever possible
- We focus on effectively resolving complaints within our published timescales
- Customers are kept fully informed about who is handling their complaint, how to contact them and what will happen next and by when



## What are we signing up to?

### Core commitment

#### We can demonstrate that:

#### We deliver a quality complaints service (continued)

- Customers receive a decision that is objective and evidence-based and which addresses all the issues that have been raised
- We keep clear and accurate records as a matter of course and can account for the decisions that we have made
- Customers are informed of how they might escalate their complaint once our internal procedure is exhausted, if they feel the problem is still not resolved

#### We work with our customers to shape and improve our complaints service

- Customers are involved in the review and continuous improvement of the complaints process to ensure that it is fit-for-purpose, objective and outcome focused
- We will support tenant panels (or their equivalent) to operate independently and to be actively involved in facilitating the resolution of complaints
- We provide appropriate training to customers who are involved in the monitoring, review and resolution of complaints

#### We monitor our performance and learn from feedback to continually improve our services

- We use performance measures that are focused on monitoring the effectiveness of our complaints handling to improve the service
- We ask our customers if they are satisfied with our complaints handling and we use this feedback to learn and to improve the service
- We regularly compare our complaints service with other organisations to improve the quality and value for money of our service
- We consistently analyse the trends arising from complaints and use this information to inform our approach to customer service and staff training, to drive improvement and to target resources
- We seek to learn from all expressions of dissatisfaction, including those that are resolved at the first point of contact, and to use them to inform our improvement plans
- We regularly publish details of how we have improved our services as a result of learning from complaints



## *Signing up to the complaints charter*

We recognise that the housing sector is diverse and that capacity, resources and priorities will vary from organisation to organisation. It is also really important that organisations have the space to innovate and be creative in their approach. As such, we recommend that you use the complaints charter as a framework which can be built on and adapted to respond to individual and local circumstances. It is up to you, your staff and your customers how you use the charter – to drive continued excellence or to act as a springboard for change - the key thing is that you deliver the right outcomes for your customers.

Organisations that sign up to the complaints charter will benefit from the following:

1. **Sharing practice and learning from others:** CIH will support a free, open-access website and participating organisations will be invited to upload short, practice examples which align to the charter principles which they will share with the wider sector. This reflects the principles of transparency and sector-wide shared-learning which underpins the charters.
2. **Joining our complaints network:** organisations that sign up to the charter will join our free complaints network where other charter signatories can share ideas, expertise and knowledge to drive improvements in internal complaints management.

To sign up to Complaints: CIH charter for housing visit the webpage [www.cih.org/complaintscharter](http://www.cih.org/complaintscharter)

## *Support and assistance*

CIH has a team of experts who can provide external assistance and critical challenge. More information on our services and other useful documents can be found at [www.cih.org/yop/complaintsresources](http://www.cih.org/yop/complaintsresources)

HouseMark offer a range of services including:

- HouseMark complaints benchmarking [www.housemark.co.uk/hm.nsf/0/354BDF97FDFB107B802576830036DE97?opendocument](http://www.housemark.co.uk/hm.nsf/0/354BDF97FDFB107B802576830036DE97?opendocument)
- HouseMark complaints accreditation service [www.housemark.co.uk/hm.nsf/0/0EEB3A7FDB8EC37C8025775100545EBD?opendocument](http://www.housemark.co.uk/hm.nsf/0/0EEB3A7FDB8EC37C8025775100545EBD?opendocument)
- HouseMark complaints adviser service, in conjunction with Rafael Runco, and complaints club [www.housemark.co.uk/hm.nsf/0/CF6C0BAC37BD0228025799D004FCAf6?opendocument](http://www.housemark.co.uk/hm.nsf/0/CF6C0BAC37BD0228025799D004FCAf6?opendocument)
- Ombudsman says [www.ombudsmansays.info](http://www.ombudsmansays.info)