



COMPLAINTS HANDLING SELF ASSESSMENT 2024

INTRODUCTION

Phoenix Futures are a registered Charity, provider of social housing and a member of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. Phoenix Futures is a unique and diverse organisation that provides other areas of support to people within prison, community, and residential settings alongside its Housing Model.

We use our expertise to support people in their personal recovery and to improve their lives. We are dedicated to advocating for people who are often overlooked and stigmatised, to ensure they have a fair chance to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. Our aim is for everyone to be able to achieve their potential for themselves, their families, and communities.

The Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code sets out requirements for landlords that enables us to respond to complaints effectively and fairly.

Phoenix Futures has self-assessed against the code following its introduction in 2022. This has enabled us to improve communication channels between the people we support and us as an organisation. This has further enabled us to develop our internal policy and procedures and increased the opportunity to improve and bolster our approach across not only Housing but other service delivery areas within Phoenix Futures.

Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code:

www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Complaint-Handling-Code-Summary.pdf

Please see our 2024 self-assessment report against the revised Code.

SECTION 1: DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT

| Code requirement | Our Response | Evidence / Commentary / explanation |
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| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Our definition of a complaint defines a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction that requires a response' made orally or in writing.</i> |
| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>A person accessing any of our services does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a person expresses dissatisfaction within one of our services, we 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 our policy.</i> |
| Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored, and reviewed regularly. | Yes | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>By local managers having the autonomy and accountability to implement changes more quickly by being able to respond to suggestions or requests in a more informal way. All managers across Phoenix Futures will respond to complaints in the moment and respond robustly and consistently regarding the delivery of the service. To respond to the request in a timely manner (No longer than 10 working days)</i> |
| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>All managers across Phoenix Futures will respond to complaints in the moment and respond robustly and consistently regarding the delivery of the service. To acknowledge the conversation / leaflet regarding the complaint / To offer a resolution where possible / To inform the Quality Department of all complaints including verbal and written.</i> |
| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Surveys completed that show dissatisfaction will be followed up by the Quality & Performance Department and if anything of concern is highlighted, we will get in touch where contact details have been provided. The complaint process must be in clear and in accessible format / Available and accessible to everyone in our services / Well publicised / Detailed process and specific time frames for responding to each stage / Designed to support the needs of everyone.</i> |

SECTION 2: EXCLUSIONS

| Code requirement | Our Response | Evidence / Commentary / explanation |
|---|--------------|--|
| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>In circumstances in which a complaint will not be considered or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable. If Phoenix Futures decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the complainant, setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.</i> |
| 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court. Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy. | Yes | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>There are a number of areas that an individual complaint will not be considered, and each complaint will be considered on its own merits. If a complaint is received that is slightly different from the original complaint, but about the same broad area of activity, a decision will be made on whether the issues are sufficiently different to justify being considered as a new complaint. If Phoenix Futures decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the complainant, setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.</i> |
| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Phoenix Futures will accept complaints highlighted to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the complainant becoming aware of the issue unless they are excluded on other grounds. Phoenix Futures must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.</i> |
| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>If Phoenix Futures decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the complainant, 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 Phoenix Futures as the landlord if applicable to take on the complaint.</i> |
| Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint. | Yes | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Phoenix Futures will demonstrate a person-centred approach. Make sure you don't use a one-size fits all approach and respond flexibly to the circumstances of the case. This means considering the severity, sensitivity and other intelligence related to the issue(s) being reported.</i> |

SECTION 3: ACCESSIBILITY AND AWARENESS

| Code requirement | Our Response | Evidence / Commentary / explanation |
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| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Phoenix Futures Complaints process - Must be in clear and in accessible format and available and accessible to everyone in our services and well publicised Complaints may be made to any employee or volunteer by telephone, in person, in writing, by email, through the website or via social media.</i> |
| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Phoenix Futures Managers will make everyone aware of the Compliments and Complaints Policy and ensure that staff understand and follow this procedure and are equipped and empowered to put things right promptly where something has gone wrong, with Managers' support.</i> <i>Complaints may be made to any employee or volunteer by telephone, in person, in writing, by email, through Phoenix Future's website or via social media. Complaints can be received via cac.feedback@phoenixfutures.org.uk or services email addresses. These are forwarded on to the relevant service Manager/Director who will allocate a complaints handler. The Complaints Handler will acknowledge the complaint.</i> |
| High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain. | Yes | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>We accept that we may not always be able to meet the needs and wishes of some individuals, or that we may, from time to time, fail to come up to our own high expectations. We recognise it is important to highlight areas of improvement and we value feedback. Ensure learning from complaints is used to improve experience of people who use our services, safety, and service delivery.</i> |
| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>How to Give Feedback about our services is embedded within the Compliments & Complaints Policy. It explains the two-stage process, how contact will be made to discuss in more detail, what resolution the complainant would like to see and preferred method of contact. The 10- & 20-day timescale is included. Contact will be made to discuss the findings, any immediate actions taken and any other suggestions to resolve. This is confirmed in writing.</i> |
| The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code. | Yes | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>As part of Phoenix Futures complaints process an annual self-assessment of complaints findings will be published on the website, to include analysis of performance handling and summary of the types of complaints received. The complainant will be provided with the contact details of the Housing Ombudsman at all stages.</i> |
| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Phoenix Futures will give complainants the opportunity to have a representative handle their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting.</i> |
| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>The complainant must be provided with the contact details of the Housing Ombudsman at all stages.</i> <i>This information is also provided within the Compliments and Complaints leaflet within the services where staff will support access to the website.</i> |

SECTION 4: COMPLAINT HANDLING STAFF

| Code requirement | Our Response | Evidence / Commentary / explanation |
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| 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 | <p><i>All Phoenix Futures complaints are overseen by the Quality & Performance Department who are responsible for appointing an investigating manager to look into the complaint. The complaint allocated to an investigating Team or Service manager by the Quality team.</i></p> <p><i>All complaints received across Phoenix Futures are reported to the Executive Team and The Chair of Clinical Governance Committee. The investigation is recorded on the organisation's central management system with all correspondence and discussion points logged.</i></p> |
| 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 | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>We will use the information we hold about complaints to support quality improvement in service delivery, as well as to assess risk, measure performance, identify trends, highlight problems, demonstrate improvement, and share best practice.</i></p> <p><i>The Complaint Handler (Quality & Performance Department) is responsible for overseeing the investigations of complaints, and communication with the Complainant. And where possible to take action to resolve the issues identified. The Quality & Performance Team have sufficient access to all Managers across Phoenix Futures to enable the issues identified to be put right, should the complaint be upheld.</i></p> |
| 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 | <p>PXL Training</p> <p><i>Complaints Handling training is available to managers within Phoenix Futures that would like to increase their awareness within this area.</i></p> <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>Where appropriate, wider learnings and/or improvements from complaints will be shared to stakeholders and relevant communities on a case-by-case basis. Utilisation of other communication tools such as 'you said, we did' will also provide transparency in relation to feedback, complaints and other suggestions arising from our commitment to co-production.</i></p> |

SECTION 5: THE COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCESS

| Code requirement | Our Response | Evidence / Commentary / explanation |
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| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>All complaint handlers will</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective, impartial and fair: • Objective, with conclusions based on the facts and evidence. • Staff involved in complaints handling will be professional, impartial, independent, and accountable. • All those involved in the complaints process will be treated fairly |
| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Phoenix Futures Compliments and Complaints policy, which has two formal stages which includes the potential to appeal to the various bodies which regulate our work.</i> <i>In 2024 we removed the "Local complaint" stage in line with the requirements, so now only have two stages.</i> |
| A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman. | Yes | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Simple and timely: Has as few stages as possible and supports complaints being completed, where possible, within 10 or 20 working days of acknowledging the complaint, depending on the Stage and nature of the Complaint.</i> |
| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Where a complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, this must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this policy. Complainants must not be expected to go through two separate complaints processes.</i> |
| Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code. | Yes | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Where a complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, this must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this policy.</i> |
| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Our definition of a complaint defines a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction that requires a response' made orally or in writing. All Phoenix Futures staff will try to resolve complaints at the time they are made or within a specific timeframe of working days.</i> <i>Where there is reason to believe our conduct has fallen short, we want to be able to resolve any issues and learn from what has happened so that we can continuously improve.</i> <i>At all times during the investigation the Complaint Handler will attempt to resolve the situation and the outcome the person is seeking.</i> |

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| 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 | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>Phoenix Futures acknowledges to be responsible and accountable for complaint handling. Discuss the Compliments and Complaints procedure with every person accessing the service.</i></p> <p><i>Follow the Compliments and Complaints Procedures to ensure people who use our services are informed about this process and feel supported in it and staff are able, with Managers' support, to put things right promptly where something has gone wrong.</i></p> |
| <p>At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>As part of the investigation: Clarify the nature of the complaint and establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved. Contact the complainant. Explain the process, timescales, possible remedies, and actions and provide contact details. Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right to find a resolution. Interview those involved in the matter and review all available evidence. Conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared.</i></p> <p><i>This will also be overseen by the Quality & Performance Department.</i></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. | Yes | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints policy</p> <p><i>Where timescales cannot be met for good reason, we will keep complainants informed of those reasons and give a revised date for feedback within 10 working days. Investigations, outcomes, and actions will be thorough and proportionate whilst being flexible in considering the needs of the individual complainant.</i></p> |
| 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 | <p>Evidenced in Care planning support and risk management policy</p> <p><i>Phoenix Futures is committed to ensuring that our services are accessible to people from all sectors of the community and provide the right environment to enable people in our services to feel comfortable. We will monitor our admissions decisions to ensure that we do not discriminate and will make special attempts to increase the accessibility of our services to groups with protected characteristics identified as likely to benefit from such action.</i></p> <p>As an organisation Phoenix Futures use a case management system to record and store people's information and progress. In some services, an external system will be used due to partnerships with other providers.</p> |
| 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 | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>Most complaints are best resolved at the local service level to ensure that they are investigated promptly and thoroughly. All complaints are initially handled by local managers, except complaints that relate to the local manager, or if the complaint is about safeguarding or abuse.</i></p> <p><i>The Quality department will assign a Team or Service Manager and or another manager to handle the investigation at both Stage 1 & 2. This will be dependent on the nature of the complaint.</i></p> |
| 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 | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>This is managed by the Quality & performance Department and will be logged and tracked on a central management system. All correspondence relating to complaint will also be stored and logged in the system. As part of Phoenix Futures feedback loop, we have a separate platform to collate surveys which is managed by the same department.</i></p> |

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| Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation. | Yes | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Phoenix Futures always during the investigation will: Clarify the nature of the complaint and establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved. Contact the complainant. Explain the process, timescales, possible remedies, and actions and provide contact details. Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right to find a resolution. Interview those involved in the matter and review all available evidence. Conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared.</i> |
| 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 | <i>Phoenix Futures has several policies to support and demonstrate regarding the provision for managing unacceptable behaviour such as the Move On & Resettlement Support Policy & also Ending of Licence Agreement Policy, On Call Policy, Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, and Ending Assured & Assured shorthold tenancy agreements Policy</i> |
| Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. | Yes | Housing Management Policy <i>Each service will have house rules that are relevant to the service being provided, although they must support and endorse the overall aims of Phoenix Futures and comply with statutory regulations and housing legislation. The house rules should also be referred to within licence and tenancy agreements to ensure any breach of rules can be addressed through housing management procedures (e.g. use of drug or alcohol on the premises).</i> <i>Phoenix Futures also has several other policies to support and demonstrate regard for provision such as the Move On & Resettlement Support Policy & also Ending of Licence Agreement Policy, On Call Policy.</i> |

SECTION 6: COMPLAINTS STAGES: STAGE 1

| Code requirement | Our Response | Evidence / Commentary / explanation |
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| Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident. | Yes | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>Providing fair and proportionate remedies is an integral part of good complaint handling. The person handling the complaint will aim to offer this to the complainant within the correct timeframes and they will formally respond to the complainant in writing through the Quality Department.</i></p> <p><i>Complaints will be aimed to be resolved within 10 working days. Where this is not possible, for example if the complaint relates to more than one team, we will notify the complainant with an explanation and revised timescale.</i></p> |
| Complaints must be acknowledged, defined, and logged at stage 1 of the complaint's procedure within five working days of the complaint being received. | Yes | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>Formal Complaints will be acknowledged by the Quality Team within 5 working days.</i></p> <p><i>As part of the process the Quality & Performance Department will support the investigating Manager to update complainants during the process.</i></p> |
| Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged. | Yes | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>Complaints will be aimed to be resolved within 10 working days. Where this is not possible, for example if the complaint relates to more than one team, we will notify the complainant with an explanation and revised timescale.</i></p> |
| 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 | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>Managers to inform complainant about an extension to the timescales when investigating a complaint. Complainant must be provided with the contact details of the Care Inspectorate / Housing Ombudsman / CQC at all stages.</i></p> |
| When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman. | Yes | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>This also managed and supported by the Quality & Performance Department. All response letters and Compliments and Complaints leaflets have the Ombudsman's details within them and the online survey platform.</i></p> |
| 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 | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>All complaints received are managed and supported by the Quality & Performance Department and as part of the internal process and timeframes allocated, response letters are sent to the complainant as quickly and as timely as possible.</i></p> <p><i>Depending on the nature of the complaint, some actions may need to be taken immediately, before full investigation, for example to prevent or reduce risk of harm. This is important as complaints can sometimes contain several issues and is crucial to support the complainant to pinpoint the specifics of their complaint. Being specific about the key points of the complaint allows each aspect to be investigated, and a decision made as to whether the complaint is Upheld, Partially Upheld or Not Upheld.</i></p> |
| 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 | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>Investigations, outcomes, and actions will be thorough and proportionate whilst being flexible in considering the needs of the individual complainant. If the complaint is upheld, we will identify improvements and take appropriate action which will be followed through by the Service Manager and or the Head of Operations.</i></p> <p><i>This is also applicable to the Housing Management Policy to adhere to Housing legislation depending on the nature of the complaint.</i></p> |

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| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>How Phoenix Futures responds to people in the services is integral on creating a supportive and more engaging streamlined process, to get the best outcome we can provide. By local managers having the autonomy and accountability to implement changes more quickly by being able to respond to suggestions or requests in a more informal way.</i> <i>If the issue is not resolved, the local Team or Service manager should inform the Quality Department and provide complainant with the decision of the findings and reasons for the decisions made.</i> |
| Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. | Yes | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>As part of the Compliments and Complaints policy the Quality & Performance Department will provide Complaint Handlers with a series of documents to support their role in this process. All responses cover the requirements within this code.</i> |

SECTION 6: COMPLAINTS STAGES: STAGE 2

| Code requirement | Our Response | Evidence / Commentary / explanation |
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| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>We will carry out a formal investigation when necessary and ensure that a further internal review is available if the complainant is still dissatisfied through appeal.</i> |
| Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined, and logged at stage 2 of the complaint's procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received. | Yes | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>The Quality Team will confirm receipt of the appeal within 5 working days on behalf of the Chief Executive's Office. If it concerns alleged harassment, it will be sent within three working days.</i> |
| 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 | <i>Phoenix Futures has no requirement within the policy for a person to give a reason for requesting a Stage 2 Appeal.</i> <i>As part of the process the complaints handler would encourage the person to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem, so to look for a solution.</i> |
| The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1. | Yes | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the response or resolution to this stage, they can proceed to Stage 2 Appeal. A Senior Manager will be assigned to investigate the complaint.</i> <i>This will be decided by the Quality & Performance Department or a Director with Phoenix Futures.</i> |
| Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged. | Yes | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>The Stage 2 Appeal timeframe is 20 working days to resolve or respond. This can be extended for a further 20 days with a full explanation given.</i> <i>If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the response or resolution from the Appeal Stage, they can contact external regulators and will be provided with the information at all stages of the complaint process.</i> |
| 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 | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Phoenix Futures has few stages as possible and supports complaints being completed, where possible, within 20 working days of acknowledging the complaint, depending on the Stage and nature of the Complaint. Where timescales cannot be met for good reason, we will keep complainants informed of those reasons and give a revised date for feedback within 10 working days.</i> |
| When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman. | Yes | Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Managers to inform complainant about an extension to the timescales when investigating a complaint. Complainant must be provided with the contact details of the Care Inspectorate / Housing Ombudsman / CQC at all stages.</i> <i>This also managed and supported by the Quality & Performance Department. All response letters and Compliments and Complaints leaflets have the Ombudsman's details within them and the online survey platform.</i> |

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| 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 | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>All complaints received are managed and supported by the Quality & Performance Department and as part of the internal process and timeframes allocated, response letters are sent to the complainant as quickly and as timely as possible.</i></p> <p><i>Depending on the nature of the complaint, some actions may need to be taken immediately, before full investigation, for example to prevent or reduce risk of harm. This is important as complaints can sometimes contain several issues and is crucial to support the complainant to pinpoint the specifics of their complaint. Being specific about the key points of the complaint allows each aspect to be investigated, and a decision made as to whether the complaint is Upheld, Partially Upheld or Not Upheld.</i></p> |
| 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 | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>Investigations, outcomes, and actions will be thorough and proportionate whilst being flexible in considering the needs of the individual complainant. If the complaint is upheld, we will identify improvements and take appropriate action which will be followed through by the Service Manager and or the Head of Operations.</i></p> <p><i>This is also applicable to the Housing Management Policy to adhere to Housing legislation depending on the nature of the complaint.</i></p> |
| <p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>As part of the Compliments and Complaints policy the Quality & Performance Department will provide Complaint Handlers with a series of documents to support their role in this process. All responses cover the requirements within this code.</i></p> <p><i>Good complaint handling should ensure that all feedback and lessons learnt from complaints contribute to service improvement. Learning from complaints should be fed back to services to improve their performance.</i></p> |
| Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response. | Yes | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>Appeal made in writing to the Chief Executive's Office and or through CAC Mailbox explaining the grounds for appeal. This would prompt a further investigation and then a response given to either uphold or reject the appeal.</i></p> <p><i>Appeals will be handled by a manager more senior to the person who handled the original investigation and resolved within the timeframe allocated. The complainant will be notified of the outcome of their appeal in writing.</i></p> <p><i>This will be noted in the response letter that this is the final response.</i></p> |

SECTION 7: PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

| Code requirement | Our Response | Evidence / Commentary / explanation |
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| <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologising; • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; • Providing an explanation, assistance, or reasons; • Taking action if there has been delay; • Reconsidering or changing a decision; • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • Providing a financial remedy; • Changing policies, procedures, or practices. | Yes | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>It may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following both verbally and in writing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An explanation. • An assurance that the event will be investigated thoroughly and in line with Phoenix Futures policies. • A possible apology and an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better. An apology may be the only way of restoring Complainant's trust. (An admission that Phoenix Futures could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence). • Remedial actions implemented as soon as possible, which may include reviewing or changing a decision on the service given to an individual complainant; revising published material; revising procedures, policies, or guidance to prevent the same thing happening again; training or supervising staff; or any combination of these. |
| Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified. | Yes | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be open and honest when accounting for decisions and actions, giving clear, evidence-based explanations and reasons. • The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the person where appropriate. • Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion by the service manager and or Head of Operations within Phoenix Futures. |
| 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 | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p><i>The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the person where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion by the service manager and or Head of Operations within Phoenix Futures.</i></p> <p><i>There are some limits to Phoenix Futures ability to provide certain remedies, and complainant's wishes may not always be reasonable. Any failings should be acknowledged and remedied quickly and fairly and in a way that best reflects the extent of the problems encountered by the complainant. Appropriate redress should include an apology, an explanation and correcting the area of complaint.</i></p> |
| Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies. | Yes | <p><i>All guidance issued by the Ombudsman will be considered when deciding the most appropriate remedy related to the findings of the complaint. Any remedy will be agreed at a senior level within Phoenix Futures.</i></p> |

SECTION 8: SELF-ASSESSMENT, REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE

| Code requirement | Our Response | Evidence / Commentary / explanation |
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| <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"> 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 | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p>Good complaint handling should ensure that all feedback and lessons learnt from complaints contribute to service improvement. Learning from complaints should be fed back to services to improve their performance. As part of the process, we will:</p> <p>As part of Phoenix Futures complaints process an annual self-assessment of complaints findings will be published on the website, to include analysis of performance handling and summary of the types of complaints received.</p> <p>This will also be shared with the Board of Trustees for review and response; with the response also published on the Phoenix Futures website.</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. | Yes | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p>As part of Phoenix Futures complaints process an annual self-assessment of complaints findings will be published on the website, to include analysis of performance handling and summary of the types of complaints received. This will also be shared with the Board of Trustees for review and response; with the response also published on the Phoenix Futures website.</p> <p>This will also be shared with the Chair of the Clinical Governance Committee.</p> |
| Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures. | Yes | <i>Noted and will be included into future changes within Phoenix Futures Standard Operating procedures, as part of the implantation plan specifically to restructure or merger or a change in procedures within our housing model.</i> |
| Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation. | Yes | <i>Noted and will be included into future changes within Phoenix Futures Standard Operating procedures.</i> |
| If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code. | Yes | <p><i>This is noted and as part of contingency plans evidenced in each service Contingency Plans, it is recognised the immediate responsibilities Phoenix Futures has as an organisation to inform and contact regulatory bodies and others in specific circumstances. As an example, this would apply to Cyber Security: Who is to be contacted, when, and how? What immediate actions must be taken in the event of certain occurrences?</i></p> |

SECTION 9: SCRUTINY & OVERSIGHT: CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

| Code requirement | Our Response | Evidence / Commentary / explanation |
|--|--------------|--|
| 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 | Complaints are reported to the Executive Team and the Board of Trustees via the Clinical Governance Committee. This will assist continuous improvement and to support a positive complaint handling culture. |
| <p>As a minimum, the MRC, and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report. | Yes | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p>Where appropriate, wider learnings and/or improvements from complaints will be shared to stakeholders and relevant communities on a case-by-case basis. Utilisation of other communication tools such as 'you said, we did' will also provide transparency in relation to feedback, complaints and other suggestions arising from our commitment to co-production. We will use the information we hold about complaints to support quality improvement in service delivery, as well as to assess risk, measure performance, identify trends, highlight problems, demonstrate improvement, and share best practice.</p> <p>We will also provide key reports that will feed into bigger and wider projects that will also assist and support service improvement plans across the organisation.</p> |
| <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"> 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 | <p>Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy</p> <p>Complaints are valuable to people who use our services, who deserve an explanation when things possibly go wrong, or need improving and want to know that steps have been taken to make it less likely to happen again. Feedback is integral to our organisation, because they help us to get an accurate picture of the level and quality of our services and we use all feedback to continuously improve our services; in the case of complaints to satisfactorily resolve problems where possible. Complaints may signal a problem – the information can help save lives and raising concerns will help improve the quality of care for other people.</p> <p>At Phoenix, we help people affected by drug and alcohol use every step of the way, which includes when someone feels we have not met their expectations. In order to do this to the best of our ability we will continue to provide information so that we can help shape and influence policy and highlight improvements to meet the needs of the people that use our services.</p> |