



COMPLAINTS HANDLING SELF ASSESSMENT 2025

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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.

Please see our 2025 self-assessment report against the Complaint Handling Code.

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Section 1 : Definition of a Complaint

Code Requirement	Our Response	Evidence / Commentary / explanation
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.</i> <i>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>Local Managers have the autonomy and accountability to implement changes, in response to service requests, more quickly. Service Requests are logged, monitored and reviewed within local teams.</i> <i>All managers across Phoenix Futures will respond to service requests in a timely manner, responding robustly and consistently regarding the delivery of the service.</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 an expression of dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, escalating this to a complaint.</i> <i>Managers will acknowledge the conversation and inform the Quality & Performance Department of any complaints - including verbal and written.</i> <i>Managers will also continue to offer a resolution to the original service request, alongside any formal complaints processes.</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>Any surveys completed that show dissatisfaction will be followed up by the Quality & Performance Department directly with the relevant manager(s). If anything of concern is highlighted, we will get in touch with the responder where contact details have been provided.</i> <i>In 2025, we have added details of our compliments and complaints process to our satisfaction surveys, to ensure our complaints process remains accessible and well publicised to everyone in our services.</i>
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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, these circumstances must be fair and reasonable.</i> <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.</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: - 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 small handful of areas that an individual complaint will not be considered; with each complaint will be considered on its own merits. If, for example, 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.</i> <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.</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 brought to their attention within 12 months of the issue occurring, or the complainant becoming aware of the issue - unless they are excluded on other grounds.</i> <i>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> <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.</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.</i> <i>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 in respect of every individual complaint raised. We will make sure we 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
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.</i> <i>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.</i> <i>Complaints can be received via cac.feedback@phoenixfutures.org.uk or services email addresses. The Quality & Performance Department will allocate an Investigating Manager. Both the Quality & Performance Department and Investigating Manager will acknowledge the complaint both in writing and verbally to the complainant.</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 always value feedback.</i> <i>We 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>Complaint policy and processes are clearly articulated and publicised across our services, both via the policy but also through service posters, service induction and staff communication.</i> <i>Our policy is also available on the Phoenix Futures website.</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. This will include analysis of performance handling and summary of the types of complaints received.</i> <i>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 by, or accompanied, at any meeting or interaction during the proceedings.</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 and contact points (where possible) during a complaint process.</i> <i>This information is also provided within the Compliments and Complaints leaflet, available in services. Detail of the Housing Ombudsman is also available on our website.</i>

Section 4 : Complaint Handling Staff

Code Requirement	Our Response	Evidence / Commentary / explanation
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	<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 will be allocated to an Investigating Manager by the Quality & Performance Department.</i> <i>All complaints received across Phoenix Futures are additionally reported to the Executive Team and The Chair of Clinical Governance Committee.</i> <i>The investigation is recorded on the organisation's central management system with all correspondence and discussion points logged. This responsibility sits with the Quality & Performance Department.</i>
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	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <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> <i>The Complaint Handler is responsible for overseeing the investigations of complaints, and communication with the Complainant. And where possible to take action to resolve the issues identified.</i> <i>The Quality & Performance Department have sufficient access to all Managers across Phoenix Futures to enable the issues identified to be put right, should the complaint be upheld.</i>
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	PXL Training <i>Complaints Handling training is available to managers within Phoenix Futures that would like to increase their awareness within this area.</i> Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Where appropriate, wider learnings and/or improvements from complaints will be shared to stakeholders and relevant communities. Utilisation of other communication tools such as 'you said, we did' is also encouraged to provide transparency in relation to feedback, complaints and other suggestions arising from our commitment to co-production.</i>

Section 5 : The Complaint Handling Process

Code Requirement	Our Response	Evidence / Commentary / explanation
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 be:</i> • <i>Objective, impartial and fair:</i> • <i>Objective, with conclusions based on the facts and evidence.</i> • <i>Staff involved in complaints handling will be professional, impartial, independent, and accountable.</i> • <i>All those involved in the complaints process will be treated fairly</i>
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 detail around the right to appeal to the various bodies which regulate our work/services.</i> <i>In 2024 we removed the “Local complaint” stage in line with the requirements, so now only have two stages to ensure a streamlined and effective complaint process.</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: Our complaint process as few stages as possible and supports complaints being fully investigated and responded to, 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.</i> <i>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.</i> <i>The Quality & Performance Department will contact the complainant to clarify and confirm their understanding of the complaint, ensuring accurate communication with the assigned Complaint Handler.</i> <i>At all times during the complaint investigation process the Complaint Handler will attempt to resolve the situation and the outcome the person is seeking.</i>
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	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Phoenix Futures acknowledges its responsibility and accountability for complaint handling. We discuss the Compliments and Complaints procedure with every person accessing the service. However, where we are not responsible for certain aspects of a complaint, we will clearly articulate this to the complainant in writing and clarify any areas where this is not clear.</i>
At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: - deal with complaints on their merits, 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; and - consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.	Yes	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>As part of the investigation, Phoenix futures will: Clarify the nature of the complaint and establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved.</i> <i>Contact the complainant to explain the process, timescales, possible remedies and actions, as well as provide contact details. We will clarify what the complainant feels would put things right to find a resolution.</i> <i>Interview those involved in the matter and review all available evidence. Conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared. As well as consider all relevant information and evidence carefully (including, but not limited to, case management systems, incident statements, any relevant policy or procedure, and/or CCTV).</i>

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	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints policy <i>Where timescales cannot be met for good reason, the Quality & Performance Department will keep complainants informed of those reasons as soon as possible and give a revised date for feedback.</i> <i>Investigations, outcomes, and actions will be thorough and proportionate whilst being flexible in considering the needs of the individual complainant.</i>
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	Evidenced in Care Planning Support and Risk Management Policy <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.</i> <i>We 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> <i>As an organisation Phoenix Futures use a case management system to record and store people's information and progress.</i>
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	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>If in the event Phoenix Futures refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure, this refusal, and explanation for refusal, will clearly be communicated with the complaint without delay. The Quality & Performance Department will be accountable for this action, to line with the provision provided for in Section 2 of the Complaint Handling Code.</i>
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	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>This is managed by the Quality & Performance Department and will be logged and tracked on a central management system. All files are kept within our retention period as defined by our Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy.</i> <i>All correspondence relating to complaint will also be stored and logged in this system.</i> <i>As part of Phoenix Futures feedback loop, we have a separate platform to collate satisfaction surveys which is managed by the same department.</i>

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>The majority of complaints will be investigated by local manager relevant to the individual service as to which the complaint pertains to.</i> <i>At Phoenix Futures, local managers have autonomy and accountability to implement changes to develop and improve their services where needed. This includes any appropriate remedies provided can be provided in an effective and efficient way.</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 the provision for managing behaviour, such as the Move On & Resettlement Support Policy, Ending of Licence Agreement Policy, On Call Policy, Anti-Social Behaviour, Harassment and Hate Crime Policy, as well as Ending Assured & Assured Shorthold Policy.</i> <i>Phoenix Futures manages its behaviour intervention policies by ensuring clear communication, transparent procedures, and person-centred support. Policies are regularly reviewed and can be applied to any complaints handling processes.</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	<i>Phoenix Futures ensures that house rules are clearly communicated to all service users from the outset and are incorporated into licence and tenancy agreements. This transparency helps service users understand expectations and the consequences of any breaches, reducing misunderstandings.</i> <i>Staff are trained to apply these rules fairly and consistently, and support is offered to address any issues early on, such as through the Housing Management Policy, Move On & Resettlement Support Policy and the Ending of Licence & Assured Shorthold Agreement Policy.</i>

Section 6 : Complaint Stages (Stage 1)

Code Requirement	Our Response	Evidence / Commentary / explanation
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	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Providing fair and proportionate remedies is an integral part of good complaint handling. The Investigating Manager handling the complaint will aim to offer this to the complainant within 10 working days, however we will always seek to provide a response as soon as possible.</i>
Complaints must be acknowledged, defined, and logged at stage 1 of the complaint's procedure <u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u>	Yes	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Formal Complaints will be acknowledged by the Quality & Performance Department within 5 working days.</i> <i>The Quality & Performance Department will verbally acknowledge the complaint where possible, as well as send an acknowledgement email to the complainant. This communication is to allow an opportunity to fully explain the complaints process and timescales of when they can expect to receive a response regarding their complaint.</i> <i>As part of the process the Quality & Performance Department will support the Investigating Manager to update complainants during the process.</i>
Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <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 as soon as possible.</i> <i>This responsibility sits with the Quality & Performance Department.</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 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>The Quality & Performance Department will inform complainant about any extension to the timescales required when investigating a complaint. Clear explanation of the reason for extension will be communicated.</i> <i>The complainant will be provided with the contact details of the relevant regulatory authority (i.e. Care Inspectorate / Housing Ombudsman / CQC) at all stages and contact points.</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>When an extension is communicated, the complainant will be provided with the contact details of the relevant regulatory authority (i.e. Care Inspectorate / Housing Ombudsman / CQC) at all stages and contact points.</i>
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	<i>All complaints responses will be shared without delay. This includes not waiting until all outstanding actions are completed.</i> <i>In the case of outstanding actions, appropriate updates will be provided to the resident by the most appropriate person (either the Quality & Performance Department or the Investigating/Appeal Manager).</i> <i>We equally acknowledge that 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.</i>
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	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Complaint responses will be structured to allow for all points raised to be clearly distinct, providing clear reasons for outcomes and/or decision made. Where possible and appropriate, we will always reference relevant policy, law and/or good practice.</i>

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.</i> <i>When complainants raise additional complaints/points and/or evidence and these are related to the nature of the complaint being currently investigated, all aspects will be incorporated into the Stage 1 response, where possible.</i> <i>Where the issues are unrelated to what is already being investigated, this will be clearly articulated to the complainant by the Quality & Performance Department and a new complaint will be logged.</i>
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; 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 Investigating Managers with a series of documents to support their role in this process. All responses cover the requirements within this code.</i>

Section 6 : Complaint Stages (Stage 2)

Code Requirement	Our Response	Evidence / Commentary / explanation
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 & Performance Department will confirm receipt of the appeal within 5 working days. The Quality & Performance Department will send an acknowledgement email to the complainant explaining the Stage 2 Appeal process and timescales of when they can expect to receive a response to their Appeal.</i> <i>The Quality & Performance Department will also call the complainant to verbally inform them of the Stage 2 Appeal process and appropriate timescales.</i> <i>If the complaint 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. However, we will always seek clarity if we are unsure in the interests of all parties.</i> <i>Moreover, as part of the process the Appeal Manager would encourage the person to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem, to promote a solution focused approach.</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. At this point an Appeal Manager will be assigned to investigate the complaint. This manager will be more senior in role and responsibility than the Investigating Manager.</i> <i>Similar to the Stage 1 process, the Appeal Manager will be allocated by the Quality & Performance Department.</i>
Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Complaints at Stage 2 will be aimed to be resolved within 20 working days. Where this is not possible, we will notify the complainant with an explanation and revised timescale as soon as possible.</i> <i>This responsibility sits with the Quality & Performance Department.</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>The Quality & Performance Department will inform complainant about any extension to the timescales required when investigating any complaint. Clear explanation of the reason for extension will be communicated.</i> <i>The complainant will be provided with the contact details of the relevant regulatory authority (i.e. Care Inspectorate / Housing Ombudsman / CQC) at all stages and contact points.</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>When an extension is communicated, the complainant will be provided with the contact details of the relevant regulatory authority (i.e. Care Inspectorate / Housing Ombudsman / CQC) at all stages and contact points.</i>
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	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <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> <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 an outcome will be provided.</i>

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	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Complaint responses will be structured to allow for all points raised to be clearly distinct, providing clear reasons for outcomes and/or decision made. Where possible and appropriate, we will always reference relevant policy, law and/or good practice.</i>
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	<i>As part of the Compliments and Complaints policy the Quality & Performance Department will provide Appeal Managers with a series of documents to support their role in this process. All responses cover the requirements within this code.</i>
Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Appeals will be handled by a manager more senior to the person who handled the original investigation. Where other members of staff need to be consulted to issue the response, the Quality & Performance Team will provide resource and support to ensure a full and comprehensive response.</i> <i>The complainant will be notified of the outcome of their appeal in writing, and informed that this is the final stage within Phoenix Futures complaint process for transparency.</i>

Section 7: Putting things right

Code Requirement	Our Response	Evidence / Commentary / explanation
Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include: • Apologising; • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; • Providing an explanation, assistance, or reasons; • Taking action if there has been delay; • Reconsidering or changing a decision; • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • Providing a financial remedy; • Changing policies, procedures, or practices.	Yes	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>It may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:</i> • <i>An explanation.</i> • <i>An assurance that the event will be investigated thoroughly and in line with Phoenix Futures policies.</i> • <i>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).</i> • <i>Confirmation of any remedial actions both that have been implemented as well as those to be implemented. These may include reviewing or changing a decision on the service given to an individual complainant; revising published material; revising procedures, policies, and/or guidance to prevent the same thing happening again; training or the supervision of staff; or equally, any combination of these.</i>
Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Phoenix Futures will:</i> • <i>Be open and honest when accounting for decisions and actions, giving clear, evidence-based explanations and reasons.</i> • <i>The remedy offered must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the person where appropriate.</i> • <i>Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion by the Service Manager and or Head of Operations within Phoenix Futures.</i>

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	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>The remedy offered 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> <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.</i>
Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	<i>All guidance issued by the Ombudsman will be considered when deciding the most appropriate remedy related to the findings of the complaint.</i>

Section 8 : Self-assessment, Reporting and Compliance

Code Requirement	Our Response	Evidence / Commentary / explanation
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	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>As part of Phoenix Futures' complaints process, an annual self-assessment of complaints findings will be published on our Phoenix Futures website. This will include analysis of performance handling and summary of the types of complaints received.</i> <i>This will also be shared with the Board of Trustees for review and response; with the response also published on the Phoenix Futures website.</i> <i>This will also be shared with the Chair of Phoenix Futures' Clinical Governance Committee.</i>

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	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>As part of Phoenix Futures' complaints process, an annual self-assessment of complaints findings will be published on our Phoenix Futures website. This will include analysis of performance handling and summary of the types of complaints received.</i> <i>This will also be shared with the Board of Trustees for review and response; with the response also published on the Phoenix Futures website.</i>
Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	<i>Noted, and will be completed in the event of a restructure, merger or a change in procedures within our operations.</i>
Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	<i>Noted, and will be completed in the event of an Ombudsman Investigation.</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	<i>Noted and will form part of the organisations' Business Continuity Plan(s). It is additionally recognised and noted that Phoenix Futures has immediate responsibilities to inform and contact regulatory bodies and other external stakeholders in such circumstances.</i>
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Section 9 : Scrutiny & Oversight - Continuous Learning and Improvement

Code Requirement	Our Response	Evidence / Commentary / explanation
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	Evidenced in Compliments and Complaints Policy <i>As part of the investigation procedure, any learning outcomes identified by the Investigating Manager are communicated to the relevant Manager responsible for the business area of which the complaint pertains to. This feedback is facilitated by the Quality and Performance Team, who ensure that appropriate corrective actions are initiated to address the identified issues.</i> <i>To support sustained improvement, the Quality and Performance Team additionally operates a monitoring system, which involves regular follow-up and progress tracking to verify that all recommended improvements have been effectively implemented within the respective team or service area.</i>
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	Evidenced in Compliments and Complaints Policy, as well as Compliment and Complaint Forms and Posters <i>Phoenix Futures are committed to informing people who access our services how to make a complaint. This commitment is reflected through the visible display of informational posters and the availability of physical complaint forms in every setting as a standard provision. In addition, we facilitate service-user forums to encourage open dialogue and feedback.</i> <i>Complaints are actively welcomed and addressed in a constructive manner. Rather than being viewed negatively, they are recognised as valuable sources of feedback that contribute to strengthening relationships, enhancing service quality, and preventing the recurrence of issues.</i>

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	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>The Quality and Performance Team provides a formal quarterly report on complaints to support the organisation's trend analysis. This report is shared with the Executive Team, Clinical Governance Committee, and other key stakeholders. It outlines recurring themes in complaints and captures the critical lessons learned, serving as a foundation for continuous service improvement and strategic decision-making.</i>
Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Yes	Evidenced in Compliments and Complaints Policy and Organisational Trends Reports <i>The Deputy Head of the Quality and Performance Team serves as the Senior Lead responsible for overseeing complaint handling across the organisation. As part of this role, they ensure quarterly reviews of complaint data take place to identify recurring patterns, assess potential systemic issues, evaluate significant risks, and determine whether existing policies and procedures require revision or amendment.</i> <i>The Deputy Head of Quality and Performance directly line managers the Complaints Officer.</i>
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	<i>Francis Keaney is a Trustee and a member of Phoenix Futures Clinical Governance Committee. Francis is the person referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').</i>
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	<i>All complaints are formally reported to the Executive Team and the Board of Trustees through the Clinical Governance Committee, via cyclical organisational trends reports. These reports play a critical role in driving continuous improvement and fostering a positive culture of complaint handling at the strategic level.</i>

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 investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.	Yes	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Outcomes, volumes and categories of complaints will be shared with the with the Board of Trustees via the Clinical Governance Committee on a quarterly basis. Moreover, where available, wider learnings and/or improvements from complaints will also be shared. This will assist continuous improvement and to support a positive complaint handling culture at a strategic level.</i> <i>Our annual complaints performance and service improvement report is also shared via this means.</i> <i>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.</i>
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	Evidenced in Compliments & Complaints Policy <i>Complaints are a valuable tool to people who use our services, for those who deserve an explanation when things go wrong, or need improving, and when they want to know that steps have been taken to make it less likely to happen again.</i> <i>Feedback is also integral to our organisation. Feedback helps us to get an accurate picture of the level and quality of our services. We use all feedback to continuously improve our services, and in the case of complaints, to satisfactorily resolve problems where possible. Complaints may signal a problem – this information can help save lives and continue to improve the quality of care for others.</i> <i>At Phoenix Futures, we support 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 all relevant information so that we can help shape and influence policy, as well as highlight improvements to meet the needs of the people that use our services.</i>