

Self-Assessment Form

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and discussed at the landlord's governing body annually.

Evidence should be included to support all statements with additional commentary as necessary.

Explanations must also be provided where a mandatory 'must' requirement is not met to set out the rationale for the alternative approach adopted and why this delivers a better outcome.

Section 1 - Definition of a complaint

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.2	<p>A complaint must be defined as:</p> <p><i>'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.'</i></p>	Yes	<p>The definition used by the Council, in the Mid Devon District Council's (MDDC) Complaints and Feedback Policy, as published on-line can be found at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-council/customer-services/customer-feedback-and-complaints/how-our-complaints-procedure-works/</p> <p>The Policy states the following definition: "An expression of dissatisfaction about the council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action taken or the service was provided by the council itself or a body acting on behalf of the council".</p> <p>No changes are deemed to be necessary in relation to this definition due to the fact that it is very close to the definition suggested by the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS). It is based on the definition provided by the Local Government Ombudsman.</p> <p>MDH uses the HOS definition of a complaint on their housing pages at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/mid</p>

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
			-devon-housing/
1.3	The resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must still be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.	Yes	<p>MDH will raise a complaint where the tenant has shown some level of dissatisfaction.</p> <p>MDH uses the HOS definition of a complaint on their housing pages at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/mid-devon-housing/</p> <p>All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with MDDC Complaints and Feedback Policy as published on-line can be found at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-council/customer-services/customer-feedback-and-complaints/how-our-complaints-procedure-works/</p>
1.6	If further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter, or if the resident requests it, the issue must be logged as a complaint.	Yes	<p>All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with MDDC Complaints and Feedback Policy as published on-line can be found at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-council/customer-services/customer-feedback-and-complaints/how-our-complaints-procedure-works/</p>
1.7	A landlord must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so.	Yes	<p>All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with MDDC Complaints and Feedback Policy as published on-line can be found at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-council/customer-services/customer-feedback-and-complaints/how-our-complaints-procedure-works/</p>

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.8	A complaints policy must clearly set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered, and these circumstances should be fair and reasonable to residents.	Yes	<p>The MDCC Complaints and Feedback Policy states under section 9 – Unreasonable, unreasonably persistent and vexatious complaints.</p> <p>In line with our policy relating to Complaints and Feedback, the Council will not treat an initial request for a service to be delivered as a complaint.</p> <p>The policy identifies situations and ways of responding where a complainant might be considered to be making complaints which are unreasonable, unreasonably persistent and vexatious.</p> <p>The policy contains explicit reference to this: “The policy is intended to assist in managing people by categorising them within these terms and agreeing the actions to be taken”.</p> <p>It also states that: “Officers and Members will endeavor to respond appropriately according to the individual complainant’s needs, and in compliance with our complaints policy, but this guidance is to cover occasions where nothing further can be reasonably done to assist or rectify a real or perceived problem.”</p> <p>The Complaints and Feedback Policy as published on-line can be found at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-council/customer-services/customer-feedback-and-complaints/how-our-complaints-procedure-works/</p>

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.9	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed 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.	Yes	Mid Devon Housing (MDH) uses a standard template letter which refers to the Complaints and Feedback Policy.

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.4	Landlords should recognise the difference between a service request , where a resident may be unhappy with a situation that they wish to have rectified, and a complaint about the service they have/have not received.	Yes	<p>Examples of Service Requests are available on the Housing webpage at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/mid-devon-housing/</p> <p>Customer Services staff have been provided with a Housing Complaints Handling Factsheet which provides examples of Service Requests and Complaints.</p> <p>MDH have scheduled in 2023-24 an event on social media which provides a Spotlight on Complaints Handling. This information provides examples of Service Requests and Complaints.</p>
1.5	Survey feedback may not necessarily need to be treated as a complaint, though, where possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue their dissatisfaction as a complaint if they wish to.	Yes	<p>MDH send out a range of tenant satisfaction surveys. The Customer Engagement Team follow up any expressions of dissatisfaction.</p> <p>Once the Regulator of Social Housing, new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's) are implemented, MDH will send out a yearly survey to tenants in accordance with the requirements of the TSM's.</p>

Section 2 - Accessibility and awareness

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which residents can make a complaint such as in person, over the telephone, in writing, by email and digitally. While the Ombudsman recognises that it may not be feasible for a landlord to use all of the potential channels, there must be more than one route of access into the complaints system.	Yes	<p>MDH offers a wide range of different ways to raise a complaint.</p> <p>Information is available on the Housing webpage at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/mid-devon-housing/</p> <p>Additional information is available on the Council's webpages below:</p> <p>The Complaints and Feedback Policy states under section 8 the following:</p> <p>8. Assistance for complainants Complaints do not have to be in writing and can be made in whatever format is most suitable for the complainant; this can be by phone, email, writing a letter, using our on-line form, or in person.</p> <p>Information is available on the Council's webpage at https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-council/customer-services/customer-feedback-and-complaints/</p>
2.3	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the number of stages involved, what will happen at each stage and the timeframes for responding.	Yes	<p>The Council's website is accessible. A copy of the Complaints and Feedback Policy is available online.</p> <p>Information is available on the Council's webpage at https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-council/customer-services/customer-feedback-and-complaints/</p> <p>Information is available on the Housing webpage at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/mid-devon-housing/</p>

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.4	Landlord websites, if they exist, must include information on how to raise a complaint. The complaints policy and process must be easy to find on the website.	Yes	<p>Information is available on the Council's webpage at https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-council/customer-services/customer-feedback-and-complaints/</p> <p>Information is available on the Housing webpage at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/mid-devon-housing/</p>
2.5	Landlords must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and may need to adapt normal policies, procedures, or processes to accommodate an individual's needs. Landlords must satisfy themselves that their policy sets out how they will respond to reasonable adjustments requests in line with the Equality Act and that complaints handlers have had appropriate training to deal with such requests.	Yes	<p>The Complaints and Feedback Policy states under section 8 the following:</p> <p>8. Assistance for complainants</p> <p>Complaints do not have to be in writing and can be made in whatever format is most suitable for the complainant; this can be by phone, email, writing a letter, using our on-line form, or in person.</p> <p>Complaints can be made on behalf of customers who are unable to make the complaint themselves. Customer First staff are available to help customers who are unsure what to do. In addition, a complaint can be raised by staff employed by the Council.</p> <p>Support can be provided for those who have difficulty reading or writing.</p> <p>Information about the complaints procedure can be provided in an alternative format on request.</p> <p>Information is available on the Council's webpage at https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-</p>

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
			council/customer-services/customer-feedback-and-complaints/
2.6	Landlords must publicise the complaints policy and process, the Complaint Handling Code and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme in leaflets, posters, newsletters, online and as part of regular correspondence with residents.	Yes	MDH publicises a range of documents on their website and provides additional information via social media and via communications with tenants. MDH have scheduled in 2023-24 an event on social media which provides a Spotlight on Complaint Handling. The articles provide a range of useful information about complaints, how to raise a complaint, the role of the Housing Ombudsman Service and information on MDH's self-assessment against the Complaints Handling Code.
2.7	Landlords must provide residents with contact information for the Ombudsman as part of its regular correspondence with residents.	Yes	MDH complaint letters contain advice to tenants how to access the Housing Ombudsman Service. MDH submits ad hoc articles on their social media pages about how to make contact with the Housing Ombudsman Service.
2.8	Landlords must provide early advice to residents regarding their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service throughout their complaint, not only when the landlord's complaints process is exhausted.	Yes	MDH complaint letters contain advice to tenants how to access the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.2	Where a landlord has set up channels to communicate with its residents via social media, then it should expect to receive complaints via those channels. Policies should contain details of the steps that will be taken when a complaint is received via social media and how confidentiality and privacy will be maintained.	Yes	<p>The Complaints and Feedback Policy under sections 6 and 7 contain the following generic information:</p> <p>6. Confidentiality All complaints will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.</p> <p>7. Provision of Information We will protect customers' privacy both in face to face discussions and in the transfer and storage of information.</p> <p>All staff complete data protection training at induction and have regular updates on their responsibility in relation to the protection of personal information. Where customers provide information we will make it clear what is required and only retain as much data as is required for that purpose.</p> <p>Information is available on the Council's webpage at https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-council/customer-services/customer-feedback-and-complaints/ MDH webpage provides useful information for tenants on confidentiality and privacy when communicating with its tenants via social media. Information is available on the housing webpage at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/mid-devon-housing/</p> <p>Those officers that monitor both the MDH and corporate webpages understand the need to escalate complaints to the Complaints Officer.</p>

Section 3 - Complaint handling personnel

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
3.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling to ensure complaints receive the necessary attention, and that these are reported to the governing body. This Code will refer to that person or team as the "complaints officer".	Yes	Complaints Officer in post.
3.2	...the complaint handler appointed must have appropriate complaint handling skills and no conflicts of interest.	Yes	The Complaints Officer is suitably qualified and meets the requirements of the job specification and description for the job role.

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
3.3	Complaint handlers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be able to act sensitively and fairly • be trained to handle complaints and deal with distressed and upset residents • have access to staff at all levels to facilitate quick resolution of complaints • have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes quickly and fairly. 	Yes	The Complaints Officer is suitably qualified and meets the requirements of the job specification and description for the job role.

Section 4 - Complaint handling principles

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.1	<p>Any decision to try and resolve a concern must be taken in agreement with the resident and a landlord's audit trail/records should be able to demonstrate this. Landlords must ensure that efforts to resolve a resident's concerns do not obstruct access to the complaints procedure or result in any unreasonable delay. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'pre-complaint stage') as this causes unnecessary confusion for residents. When a complaint is made, it must be acknowledged and logged at stage one of the complaints procedure within five days of receipt.</p>	Yes	<p>MDH acknowledge all complaints within 3 working days of receipt of complaint.</p> <p>The Complaints and Feedback Policy states the following:</p> <p>All complaints will be acknowledged within three working days and resolved within 10 working days where possible (Stage 1).</p> <p>Information is available on the Council's webpage at https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-council/customer-services/customer-feedback-and-complaints/</p> <p>MDH have secure files in an electronic document management system and there is a two stage procedure in line with the policy.</p> <p>There is no pre-complaint stage.</p> <p>MDH use an integrated electronic housing management system and information about tenants and properties is held securely on that. Officers have been made aware of the need to record all relevant information. Records may also be stored in shared files or on the electronic document management system.</p>

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.2	Within the complaint acknowledgement, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	Yes	MDH highlight the nature of the complaint and how the tenant would like to resolve the complaint within their acknowledgement letter.
4.6	A complaint investigation must be conducted in an impartial manner.	Yes	The Complaints Officer investigates complaints and responds at stage 1. Should a complainant wish to escalate their complaint, the matter is reviewed by a more senior manager who has not been involved in the original complaint.
4.7	<p>The complaint handler must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deal with complaints on their merits • act independently and have an open mind • take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest • consider all information and evidence carefully • keep the complaint confidential as far as possible, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter. 	Yes	<p>The Complaints Officer job role sits in the Finance & Performance Team and reports to the Housing Finance and Performance Manager who has no day to day responsibility for tenancy and estate management, repairs and maintenance or tenant involvement. Locating the Complaints Officer in a support team ensures that they are divorced from day to day decision-making relating to property and case management.</p> <p>In the event of any conflict of interest, this will be disclosed by the Complaints Officer.</p>

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.11	Landlords must adhere to any reasonable arrangements agreed with residents in terms of frequency and method of communication.	Yes	<p>MDH will tailor their communications to the preferred method of the tenant.</p> <p>MDH gathers data about tenant's individual communication preferences which are added to a housing management system.</p>
4.12	<p>The resident, and if applicable any staff member who is the subject of the complaint, must also be given a fair chance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out their position • comment on any adverse findings before a final decision is made. 	Yes	<p>MDH offer a wide range of opportunities for tenants and staff to discuss their complaint in more detail.</p> <p>There may be occasions that a provisional of outcome of investigation letter is sent prior to a final letter response, however this is at MDH's discretion.</p> <p>The complainant has the opportunity to escalate their complaint to Stage 2 of the Council's internal complaints process.</p>
4.13	A landlord must include in its complaints policy its timescales for a resident to request escalation of a complaint.	Yes	Details are included in MDH letters.
4.14	A landlord must not unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure and must have clear and valid reasons for taking that course of action. Reasons for declining to escalate a complaint must be clearly set out in a landlord's complaints policy and must be the same as the reasons for not accepting a complaint.	Yes	Any refusal of a complaint will be in accordance with the Complaints and Feedback Policy.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.15	A full record must be kept of the complaint, any review 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 reports or surveys prepared.	Yes	MDH have secure files in an electronic document management system where this data is stored.
4.18	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives when pursuing a complaint.	Yes	<p>The MDDC Complaints and Feedback Policy states under sections 9 and 10 how to deal with unreasonable, unreasonably persistent and vexatious complaints.</p> <p>Information is available on the Council's webpage at https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-council/customer-services/customer-feedback-and-complaints/</p>

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.3	Landlords should manage residents' expectations from the outset, being clear where a desired outcome is unreasonable or unrealistic.	Yes	<p>MDH informs the tenant when a complaint does not come under their remit to investigate.</p> <p>MDH will inform the tenant at the onset where a complaint outcome is unreasonable or unrealistic to manage expectations.</p> <p>For example, when a tenant makes a complaint in which MDH had not been made aware of there being an issue. This will initially be dealt as a Service Request and if the tenant remains dissatisfied with the way we have handled their Service Request, the tenant can then escalate their Service Request to Stage 1 of the Council's internal complaints process.</p>
4.4	A complaint should be resolved at the earliest possible opportunity, having assessed what evidence is needed to fully consider the issues, what outcome would resolve the matter for the resident and whether there are any urgent actions required.	Yes	<p>The Council provides a wide range of ways to report complaints which gives them the opportunity to report their complaint and how the matter can be resolved.</p> <p>Any urgent actions raised are passed onto the relevant person/Team/service to act on.</p>
4.5	Landlords should 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 where this is reasonable.	Yes	<p>MDH acknowledgement letter states the following:</p> <p>If you would like help from someone else, there are several choices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Your District Councillor is there to represent you and, if you wish, you can ask him or her to help you.

			<p>•You could also contact an advisory agency such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.</p> <p>The Housing Ombudsman Service also provides tenants with advice on complaints handling and they can be contacted at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tel: 0300 111 3000 • Email: info@housingombudsman.org.uk • Fax: 020 7831 1942
4.8	Where a key issue of a complaint relates to the parties' legal obligations landlords should clearly set out their understanding of the obligations of both parties.	Yes	Tenants are referred to the terms and conditions of the Tenancy Agreement, Policies and Procedures where applicable.
4.9	Communication with the resident should not generally identify individual members of staff or contractors.	Yes	MDH will identify individual members of staff or contractors only when deemed necessary.
4.10	Landlords should keep residents regularly updated about the progress of the investigation.	Yes	<p>MDH provides regular updates to the tenant about the progress of an investigation.</p> <p>There may be occasions that a provisional of outcome of investigation letter is sent prior to a final letter response, however this is at MDH's discretion.</p>
4.16	Landlords should seek feedback from residents in relation to the landlord's complaint handling as part of the drive to encourage a positive complaint and learning culture.	Yes	<p>Satisfaction surveys are sent to the tenant and feedback is logged.</p> <p>Once the Regulator of Social Housing, Tenant Satisfaction new Measures (TSM's) are implemented, MDH will send out a yearly survey to tenants in accordance with the requirements of the TSM's.</p>
4.17	Landlords should recognise the impact that being complained about can have on future service delivery. Landlords should ensure that staff are supported and engaged in the complaints process, including the learning that can be gained.	Yes	Lessons learnt are shared with staff and contractors.

4.19	Any restrictions placed on a resident's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be appropriate to their needs and should demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	<p>MDH will complete a Public Sector Equity Duty form where applicable.</p> <p>MDH will considered a tenant's behaviour in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>MDH will act in accordance with the Regulator for Social Housing, Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard.</p>

Section 5 - Complaint stages

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Stage 1

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.1	Landlords must respond to the complaint <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being logged. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	<p>All complaints will be acknowledged within three working days and resolved within 10 working days where possible (Stage 1).</p> <p>Information is available on the Council's webpage at https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-council/customer-services/customer-feedback-and-complaints/</p> <p>Additional Information is available on the Housing webpage at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/mid-devon-housing/</p> <p>MDH acknowledgement letter provides details of when the tenant can expect a response to their complaint.</p>

5.5	A complaint response must be sent 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 expeditiously with regular updates provided to the resident.	Yes	
5.6	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	MDH refer to tenants to the relevant policy, procedure, legislative requirements, statutory obligations and good practice where appropriate to do so.
5.8	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage one in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complaint stage • the decision on the complaint • the reasons for any decisions made • the details of any remedy offered to put things right • details of any outstanding actions • details of how to escalate the matter to stage two if the resident is not satisfied with the answer. 	Yes	The relevant information is provided in the Stage 1 response letter.

Stage 2

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.9	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage one it must be progressed to stage two of the landlord's procedure, unless an exclusion ground now applies. In instances where a landlord declines to escalate a complaint it must clearly communicate in writing its reasons for not escalating as well as the resident's right to approach the Ombudsman about its decision.	Yes	The MDDC Complaints and Feedback Policy states under section 9 – Unreasonable, unreasonably persistent and vexatious complaints. Mid Devon District Council's (MDDC) Complaints and Feedback policy as published on-line can be found at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-council/customer-services/customer-feedback-and-complaints/how-our-complaints-procedure-works/

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.10	On receipt of the escalation request, landlords must set out their understanding of issues outstanding and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	Yes	MDH uses a standard template which highlights the tenant's complaint and how they would like to resolve the complaint.
5.11	Landlords must only escalate a complaint to stage two once it has completed stage one and at the request of the resident.	Yes	
5.12	The person considering the complaint at stage two, must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage one.	Yes	A senior manager not involved in the case will investigate any Stage 2 complaints.
5.13	Landlords must respond to the stage two complaint <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being escalated. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	
5.16	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage two in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complaint stage • the complaint definition • the decision on the complaint • the reasons for any decisions made • the details of any remedy offered to put things right • details of any outstanding actions and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the landlord has a third stage, details of how to escalate the matter to stage three • if this was the final stage, details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied. 	Yes	The relevant information is provided in the Stage 2 response letter. There is no third stage in our complaints procedure as per our policy and we give information at the end of every letter regarding the next stage of the complaint if the tenant remains dissatisfied.

Stage 3

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.17	Two stage landlord complaint procedures are ideal. This ensures that the complaint process is not unduly long. If landlords strongly believe a third stage is necessary, they must set out their reasons for this as part of their self-assessment. A process with more than three stages is not acceptable under any circumstances.	N/A	N/A
5.20	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage three in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complaint stage • the complaint definition • the decision on the complaint • the reasons for any decisions made • the details of any remedy offered to put things right • details of any outstanding actions • details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied. 	N/A	N/A

Best practice 'should' requirements

Stage 1

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.2	If an extension beyond 20 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.	Yes	MDH letter provides the tenant the opportunity to notify them if they don't agree with the revised deadline.
5.3	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response.	Yes	Where an agreement cannot be met between the landlord and tenant, details how to refer this to the HOS are contained in a letter. MDH will provide an explanation why the complaint deadline has been extended.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.4	Where the problem is a recurring issue, the landlord should consider any older reports as part of the background to the complaint if this will help to resolve the issue for the resident.	Yes	All relevant information is taken into account during the investigation process.
5.7	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these should be incorporated into the stage one response if they are relevant and the stage one response has not been issued. Where the stage one response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the complaint should be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	Any new complaints will be dealt within the current Stage 1 complaint or a new Stage 1 complaint will be raised and treated separately.

Stage 2

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.14	If an extension beyond 10 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.	Yes	MDH letter provides the tenant the opportunity to notify them if they don't agree with the revised deadline.
5.15	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's Response	Yes	Where an agreement cannot be met between the landlord and tenant, details how to refer this to the HOS are contained in a letter. MDH will provide an explanation why the complaint deadline has been extended.

Stage 3

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.18	Complaints should only go to a third stage if the resident has actively requested a third stage review of their complaint. Where a third stage is in place and has been requested, landlords must respond to the stage three complaint <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being escalated. Additional time will only be justified if related to convening a panel. An explanation and a date for when the stage three response will be received should be provided to the resident.	N/A	N/A
5.19	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response.	N/A	N/A

Section 6 - Putting things right

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
6.1	Effective dispute resolution requires a process designed to resolve complaints. 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.	Yes	<p>The Complaints and Feedback Policy under section 5, provides the aims and objectives when dealing with a complaint.</p> <p>Mid Devon District Council's (MDDC) Complaints and Feedback policy as published on-line can be found at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-council/customer-services/customer-feedback-and-complaints/how-our-complaints-procedure-works/</p> <p>MDH identifies any lessons learnt from a complaint as this is an opportunity to learn from complaints, improves tenant satisfaction and drives service improvement.</p>
6.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the extent of any service failures and the level of detriment caused to the resident as a result. A landlord must carefully manage the expectations of residents and not promise anything that cannot be delivered or would cause unfairness to other residents.	Yes	<p>Any remedy offered is in accordance with the Tenant Compensation Policy. This policy is available to view on the Council's website. Please refer to Appendix 1 under the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard Policy. This can be found at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/council-housing/strategies-and-policies/</p>
6.5	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	
6.6	In awarding compensation, a landlord must consider whether any statutory payments are due, if any quantifiable losses have been incurred, the time and trouble a resident has been put to as well as any distress and inconvenience caused.	Yes	<p>The Tenant Compensation Policy has been reviewed to take into account levels of compensation including statutory payments.</p> <p>The Tenant Compensation Policy is available to view on the Council's website. Please refer to</p>

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
			Appendix 1 under the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard Policy. This can be found at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/council-housing/strategies-and-policies/

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
6.3	Landlords should look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether anything needs to be 'put right' in terms of process or systems to the benefit of all residents.	Yes	Recommendations will be highlighted in the lessons learnt of a complaint.
6.7	In some cases, a resident may have a legal entitlement to redress. The landlord should still offer a resolution where possible, obtaining legal advice as to how any offer of resolution should be worded.	Yes	MDH will seek legal advice where relevant. Details of statutory compensation is available to view within the Tenant Compensation Policy on the Council's website. Please refer to Appendix 1 under the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard Policy. This can be found at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/council-housing/strategies-and-policies/

Section 7 - Continuous learning and improvement

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.2	Accountability and transparency are integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints in their annual report and more frequently to their residents, staff and scrutiny panels.	Yes	<p>MDH will publish the outcome of any performance data on their webpages, social medial and within the Annual Report. Performance data will be available to view on MDH's webpages at: <u>Our performance - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK</u></p> <p>A Complaints Handling Report will be presented annually to Members. These reports are available online at: <u>https://democracy.middevon.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=138&Year=0</u></p> <p>These documents are available to be viewed online by the general public, Members and staff.</p> <p>MDH offer of tenant involvement provides opportunities for tenants to become a Complaints Champion.</p> <p>MDH identifies any lessons learnt from a complaint as this is an opportunity to learn from complaints, improves tenant satisfaction and drives service improvement.</p>

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.3	A member of the governing body should be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This role will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight to the governing body on the landlord's complaint handling performance.	Yes	The Cabinet Member for Housing will be best placed to take on the role.
7.4	<p>As a minimum, governing bodies should receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular updates on the volume, categories and outcome of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance including compliance with the Ombudsman's orders • Regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling, • The annual performance report produced by the Ombudsman, where applicable • Individual complaint outcomes where necessary, including where the Ombudsman made findings of severe maladministration or referrals to regulatory bodies. The implementation of management responses should be tracked to ensure they are delivered to agreed timescales. The annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code for scrutiny and challenge. 	Yes	
7.5	Any themes or trends should be assessed by senior management to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks or policies and procedures that require revision. They should also be used to inform staff and contractor training.	Yes	Regular meetings are held with the Management Team and the Cabinet Member for Housing.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.6	<p>Landlords should have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all employees that reflects the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments • take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints rather than blaming others • act within the Professional Standards for engaging with complaints as set by the Chartered Institute of Housing. 	Yes	<p>MDH staff appraisals for 2023/24 will set objectives in relation to complaint handling.</p> <p>Customer Services staff are provided with a Housing Complaints Handling Factsheet.</p>

Section 8 - Self-assessment and compliance

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
8.1	Landlords must carry out an annual self-assessment against the Code to ensure their complaint handling remains in line with its requirements.	Yes	Mid Devon Housing undertook a yearly self-assessment against the Code in February 2023.
8.2	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure and/or change in procedures.	Yes	Mid Devon Housing underwent a housing restructure in 2021. A self assessment against the Code was undertaken in April 2022.
8.3	<p>Following each self-assessment, a landlord must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report the outcome of their self-assessment to their governing body. In the case of local authorities, self-assessment outcomes should be reported to elected members • publish the outcome of their assessment on their website if they have one, or otherwise make accessible to residents • include the self-assessment in their annual report section on complaints handling performance. 	Yes	<p>A Complaints Handling report is going to the Homes Policy Development Group at the beginning of the new financial 2034/24 year.</p> <p>The report is:</p> <p>To provide an annual update of Mid Devon Housing's (MDH) complaint handling data for the financial year 2022-23 to Members.</p> <p>To provide an annual update of the regulatory requirements as governed by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in response to</p>

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
			<p>published Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's) and any relevant updates.</p> <p>To provide an annual review of MDH's self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code.</p> <p>To provide results of a Baseline Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey</p> <p>The self-assessment form will be published on the Housing webpage at: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/mid-devon-housing/help-and-support/complaints-and-feedback/</p> <p>The self-assessment form is included in MDH's Annual Report.</p>