

Appendix A: Self-assessment form 2025.2026

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and it must be reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body at least annually.

Once approved, landlords must publish the self-assessment as part of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report on their website. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.

Landlords are required to complete the self-assessment in full and support all statements with evidence, with additional commentary as necessary.

We recognise that there may be a small number of circumstances where landlords are unable to meet the requirements, for example, if they do not have a website. In these circumstances, we expect landlords to deliver the intentions of the Code in an alternative way, for example by publishing information in a public area so that it is easily accessible.

Please note that as of April 30th 2026 – Orchard Housing Society has transferred all engagements and operations to jLiving – Jewish Community Housing Association.

The former OHS website will be shortly decommissioned and reports will therefore be published on the jLiving website.

The jLiving Complaints Policy now applies to The Orchard.

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <i>‘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.’</i>	YES	<i>The Housing Ombudsman’ Complaint Handling Code defines a complaint as ‘.....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> Page 1 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
1.3	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	<i>However, a tenant does not have to use the word ‘Complaint’ for it to be treated as such, when dissatisfaction is expressed, tenants should be given the opportunity to make a complaint.</i> Page 1 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a	YES	<i>A complaint is not a first attempt to</i>	

	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.		<i>request a service or an enquiry. A service request is a request from an individual requesting action to put something right. Staff are encouraged to take all reasonable and necessary steps to resolve any issue raised as soon as possible and many matters can be resolved by staff without the need to refer the matter as a formal complaint. A formal complaint should be raised when the individual is dissatisfied with the response to their service request. Service requests will however be recorded to ensure that they are resolved satisfactorily.</i> P1&2 - Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
1.5	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	<i>A complaint should be raised when an individual expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Orchard Housing Society will not stop their efforts to address the service request if the tenant also raises a complaint.</i>	

			P2 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
1.6	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	<i>An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, Orchard Housing Society will ensure that the individual completing the survey will be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where and when we ask for wider feedback about our services, we will also provide details of how individuals can complain.</i> P2 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	

Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	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	<i>If Orchard Housing Society decides not to accept a complaint, a full explanation will be offered as to why the complaint is not suitable for the process.</i> P2 - Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
2.2	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.	YES	<i>A complaint is not a report of anti-social behaviour. Anti-social and nuisance behaviour is dealt with under a separate procedure and will not be dealt with through the complaints procedure unless we have failed to meet our stated standards.</i> P2 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy <i>We will not deal with the following via the complaints procedure :</i>	

	• Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.		✓ <i>Complaints about other tenants.</i> ✓ <i>Any matter that has or is being dealt with by a solicitor.</i> ✓ <i>Any matter that is being dealt with by our insurers.</i> ✓ <i>Complaints that are already being considered by the Ombudsman</i> ✓ <i>Any matter that occurred more than 12 months ago</i> ✓ <i>Complaints that have already been considered under the procedure and process and that are, in the opinion of Orchard Housing Society, being pursued in an unreasonable way.</i> ✓ <i>Complaints that fall outside of Orchard Housing Society's jurisdiction</i> ✓ <i>Decisions where there is already a right of appeal unless we have not followed our own procedures.</i> ✓ <i>Service charge and rent levels – i.e. dissatisfaction with the amounts charged rather than</i>	
--	---	--	--	--

			<i>an incorrect calculation.</i> Page 2 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
2.3	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	<i>Orchard Housing Society remains mindful of its obligations as detailed in The Equality Act 2010 and will make reasonable adjustments for individuals with a disability. Orchard Housing Society will make reasonable adjustments where it is necessary for individuals with protected characteristics to ensure that the same service is provided in so far as is reasonably possible as to those who do not have a disability. Regarding this policy, this may mean allowing additional time for information to be provided or to respond to enquiries. This may also allow for extra time in addition to the 12 month limit for raising a complaint, based on the merits of the complaint and the circumstances of the individual</i> P4 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	

2.4	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	<i>If Orchard Housing Society decides not to accept a complaint, a full explanation will be offered as to why the complaint is not suitable for the process.</i> <i>Where an individual does not agree with this decision, they will be advised of their right to approach the Ombudsman when they are responded to.</i> P2 - Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	YES	<i>Orchard Housing Society provides the opportunity to make complaints to allow for dissatisfied individual to seek redress and to enable Orchard Housing Society to review and monitor its performance and delivery of services. We will consider all matters of complaint referred to the Society on an individual basis and apply the following policy and procedures.</i> P1 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	

--	--	--	--	--

Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	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	<i>How to make a complaint</i> <i>Complaints can be made by telephone, in writing, by email, via our social media platforms or in person to a member of staff. Please note however that we will not respond via social media to complaints but will respond in writing or by telephone call. Our staff are trained and experienced and understand that complaints are an opportunity to improve services and are not a threat. Staff are encouraged to identify potential complaints and to assist tenants and leaseholders to raise them.</i> <i>Tenants may prefer that a family member or friend raises a complaint on their behalf, if this is the case, we would ask that we have your consent for somebody to act on your behalf, either in writing or in person.</i>	

3.2	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	<i>All staff are trained and experienced and understand that complaints are an opportunity to improve services and are not a threat. All staff are encouraged to identify potential complaints and to assist tenants and leaseholders to raise them. All Orchard Housing Society staff have received Complaints Handling Training and ongoing support and training is provided to our staff through regular supervision meetings.</i> P3 Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
3.3	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	<i>Orchard Housing Society aims to provide an excellent service to all tenants and leaseholders and always welcomes and embraces constructive comments, suggestions, and ideas on how to continuously improve all of the services that we offer. However, we realise that as an organisation we may not always get it right.</i> P1 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	

3.4	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	<i>This policy can also be found on our website – www.Orchard Housing Society.org.uk, within our Tenant Handbook, on noticeboards within your schemes and on your digital noticeboards</i> P1 - Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	As of 30 th April 2026 – OHS has transferred all engagements to jLiving – Jewish Community Housing Association – the website is being decommissioned, and this report will be published on the jLiving website.
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	YES	<i>This policy can also be found on our website – www.Orchard Housing Society.org.uk, within our Tenant Handbook, on noticeboards within your schemes and on your digital noticeboards</i> P1 - Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
3.6	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	<i>Tenants and leaseholders may prefer that a family member or friend raises a complaint on their behalf, if this is the case, we would ask that we have your consent for somebody to act on your behalf, either in writing or in person.</i> P3 - Orchard Housing Society	

			Complaints Policy	
3.7	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	Orchard Housing Society will advise tenants throughout the process of their rights to access the Housing Ombudsman Service throughout the investigation of their complaint and not only when the Societys procedure is at an end. Individuals will be informed of their right to seek impartial advice from the Ombudsman's dispute support advisors. P 4&5 - Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	

Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	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>The nominated officer for the organisation is the Tenancy Support Manager. The Complaints Officers role is to ensure that Orchard Housing Society acts sensitively and equitably, that all staff are trained to receive and deal with complaints, enables access to all staff at all levels to allow for the quick resolution of complaints and that staff have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve complaints quickly and fairly.</i> P4 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
4.2	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	<i>The Tenancy Support Manager is the appointed Complaints Officer for the organisation and is based within the Societys Head Office – she has ready access to all members of staff at all levels.</i>	
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of	YES	<i>Training TBC</i>	

	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			
--	--	--	--	--

Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	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	<i>Please see Complaints Policy and Procedure 2024 – www.OrchardHousingSociety.org.uk</i>	As of 30 th April 2026 – OHS has transferred all engagements to jLiving – Jewish Community Housing Association – the website is being decommissioned, and this report will be published on the jLiving website. The Orchard does not operate a separate Complaint Policy and will now adopt the jLiving policy
5.2	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	<i>Orchard Housing Society believes that by working together positively and constructively with tenants and leaseholders most problems can be overcome and easily resolved, therefore we will always try to get it ‘right first time’ and will always seek</i>	

			<i>to resolve matters informally at the time that a complaint is made.</i> P1 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy <i>Staff are encouraged to take all reasonable and necessary steps to resolve any issue raised as soon as possible and many matters can be resolved by staff without the need to refer the matter as a formal complaint.</i> P2 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy <i>Orchard Housing Society will make every effort to resolve a query or complaint as quickly and as informally as possible and in line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code requirements. In many instances it is possible to resolve a complaint as soon as it is raised or reported, however there will be occasions where we may need to gather more information or seek advice.</i>	
--	--	--	---	--

			<i>Where an informal approach does not resolve the problem, the matter will be considered as a formal complaint.</i> P3 Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
5.3	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	<i>Orchard Housing Society – Complaints Policy – www.OrchardHousingSociety.org.uk</i> Stage 1 Investigation of the complaint P5 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy Stage 2 Complaint – Review & Decision P5 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	As above
5.4	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	YES	Complaints about 3rd Parties <i>Where individuals wish to raise a complaint in relation to services provided by a 3rd party on behalf of the Society, we ask that these</i>	

	to go through two complaints processes.		<i>individuals refer the matter to Orchard Housing Society in the first instance. The matter will be dealt with in accordance with this policy – ie. Where the matter can be resolved quickly and informally we will undertake this by communicating with the contractor or 3rd party and reverting to the individual concerned.</i> <i>Where the matter cannot be resolved informally and may require more investigation, the Society will again liaise on behalf of the tenant and commence Stage 1 of the Complaints process. There is no expectation that tenants should have to pursue a 3rd party's Complaints process unless they expressly wish to do so.</i> Page 4 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	YES	<i>As above & below</i> <i>3rd Parties as Adjudicators or Investigators</i>	

			<i>In some exceptional circumstances the Society may utilise the services of a 3rd party to investigate a complaint or assist with an investigation. The Society will ensure that any 3rd party engaged on this basis is fully aware of Orchard Housing Society's obligations to comply with the Ombudsmans Complaint Handling Code in terms of timescales and response. In the event of any unforeseen delays and in accordance with the Code, the Society will advise individuals accordingly of their right to seek assistance or guidance from the IHO.</i> P4 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
5.6	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	<i>At Stage 1 the Society will define and set out :</i> ✓ <i>the complaint stage</i> ✓ <i>the complaint definition</i> ✓ <i>the decision on the complaint</i> ✓ <i>the reasons for any decisions made</i> ✓ <i>the details of any remedy offered to put things right</i>	

			✓ <i>details of any outstanding actions</i> ✓ <i>details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman</i> <i>Where the grounds of the complaint are not clear, the Society will seek further clarity from the individual.</i> P6 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
5.7	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	<i>As above &</i> <i>Stage 2 responses will include the following</i> ✓ <i>the complaint stage</i> ✓ <i>the complaint definition</i> ✓ <i>the decision on the complaint</i> ✓ <i>the reasons for any decisions made</i> ✓ <i>the details of any remedy offered to put things right</i> ✓ <i>details of any outstanding actions</i> ✓ <i>details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman</i> P6 – Orchard Housing Society	

			<i>Complaints Policy</i> <i>If Orchard Housing Society decides not to accept a complaint, a full explanation will be offered as to why the complaint is not suitable for the process.</i> <i>Where an individual does not agree with this decision, they will be advised of their right to approach the Ombudsman when they are responded to.</i> P2&3 - Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.	YES	<i>How will Orchard Housing Society respond to complaints ?</i> <i>Orchard Housing Society will make every effort to resolve a query or complaint as quickly and as informally as possible and in line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code requirements. In many instances it is possible to resolve a complaint as</i>	

			<i>soon as it is raised or reported, however there will be occasions where we may need to gather more information or seek advice.</i> <i>Where an informal approach does not resolve the problem, the matter will be considered as a formal complaint.</i> <i>Orchard Housing Society staff will make every endeavour to advise how long the process is likely to take.</i> <i>Orchard Housing Society will deal with complaints objectively and will apologise where Orchard Housing Society has been at fault. Orchard Housing Society will offer compensation where the situation or matter warrants it.</i> <i>Orchard Housing Society will not unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint unless it falls within the list of exclusions stated where the policy does not apply.</i> <i>However, Orchard Housing Society reserves the right to refuse, consider</i>	
--	--	--	--	--

			<i>or review complaints when a tenants conduct, action or behaviour is considered to be unreasonable and or unacceptable.</i> P3 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
5.9	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	<i>In accordance with timescales set out by the Housing Ombudsman – Stage 1 response – within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint. If this is not going to be possible, an explanation will be offered, and a revised timescale advised. This will not normally exceed a further 10 working days without proper reason. Again, Orchard Housing Society will provide individuals with contact details for the Housing Ombudsman if the extension period is disputed</i> P5 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010.	YES	<i>Reasonable Adjustments</i>	

	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.		<i>Orchard Housing Society remains mindful of its obligations as detailed in The Equality Act 2010 and will make reasonable adjustments for individuals with a disability. Orchard Housing Society will make reasonable adjustments where it is necessary for individuals with protected characteristics to ensure that the same service is provided in so far as is reasonably possible as to those who do not have a disability. Regarding this policy, this may mean allowing additional time for information to be provided or to respond to enquiries. This may also allow for extra time in addition to the 12 month limit for raising a complaint, based on the merits of the complaint.</i> P5 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
5.11	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	YES	<i>We will not deal with the following via the complaints procedure :</i> ✓ <i>Complaints about other tenants or leaseholders</i> ✓ <i>Any matter that has or is</i>	

	section 2 of this Code.		<i>being dealt with by a solicitor.</i> ✓ <i>Any matter that is being dealt with by our insurers.</i> ✓ <i>Complaints that are already being considered by the Ombudsman</i> ✓ <i>Any matter that occurred more than 12 months ago</i> ✓ <i>Complaints that have already been considered under the procedure and process and that are, in the opinion of Orchard Housing Society, being pursued in an unreasonable way.</i> ✓ <i>Complaints that fall outside of Orchard Housing Society's jurisdiction</i> ✓ <i>Decisions where there is already a right of appeal unless we have not followed our own procedures.</i> ✓ <i>Service charge and rent levels – i.e. dissatisfaction with the amounts charged rather than an incorrect calculation.</i> <i>If Orchard Housing Society decides</i>	
--	-------------------------	--	---	--

			<i>not to accept a complaint, a full explanation will be offered as to why the complaint is not suitable for the process.</i> P2 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
5.12	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	<i>Orchard Housing Society front line staff complete weekly reports including Complaints Logs – these are forwarded to Senior Staff and Management Committee members regularly and are discussed at quarterly MC and sub committee meetings.</i>	
5.13	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	<i>Staff are encouraged to take all reasonable and necessary steps to resolve any issue raised as soon as possible and many matters can be resolved by staff without the need to refer the matter as a formal complaint</i> P2 Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents	YES	<i>Orchard Housing Society will not unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint unless it falls within the</i>	

	and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	<i>list of exclusions stated where the policy does not apply.</i> <i>However, Orchard Housing Society reserves the right to refuse, consider or review complaints when a tenant or leaseholders conduct, action or behaviour is considered to be unreasonable and or unacceptable.</i> <i>Whilst Orchard Housing Society will always seek to find a resolution before making this decision and will always endeavour to respond in a fair, balanced and proportionate manner, on occasion we shall need to invoke this clause to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and ensure that the Societys resources are utilised in a proportionate way. As a small organisation Orchard Housing Society is mindful that any complainant behaving in an unreasonable and disproportionate manner can impact on resources within a small team which in turn can negatively affect service delivery to other tenants.</i> <i>Examples of unreasonable</i>	
--	--	--	--

			<i>complaints :</i> ✓ <i>The complainant is using aggressive, threatening and or offensive language or displaying associated behaviour.</i> ✓ <i>The volume of emails, calls or correspondence being received are extensive and unmanageable.</i> ✓ <i>The outcomes being sought are unreasonable.</i> ✓ <i>There is nothing further that Orchard Housing Society can do to assist.</i> ✓ <i>The complainant continues to raise the same or related complaint when the complaint process has been exhausted and concluded.</i> ✓ <i>The resources required to deal effectively with the complaint are disproportionate to the benefit of the outcome being sought.</i> <i>If a complaint is identified as being unreasonable, Orchard Housing</i>	
--	--	--	--	--

			<i>Society will:</i> ✓ <i>Explain this clearly and set out our expectations moving forward</i> ✓ <i>Assess the needs of the complainant and refer them for additional support if required.</i> P3&4 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
5.15	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>As above – please also see Orchard Housing Society Unreasonable Behaviour Policy</i>	

Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	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	<i>How will Orchard Housing Society respond to complaints ?</i> <i>Orchard Housing Society will make every effort to resolve a query or complaint as quickly and as informally as possible and in line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code requirements. In many instances it is possible to resolve a complaint as soon as it is raised or reported, however there will be occasions where we may need to gather more information or seek advice.</i> <i>Where an informal approach does not resolve the problem, the matter will be considered as a formal complaint.</i> <i>Orchard Housing Society staff will make every endeavour to advise how long the process is likely to take.</i>	

6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u>	YES	Stage 1 Investigation of the complaint <i>If the matter or complaint cannot be resolved informally, it will be escalated to Stage 1 and the Head of Housing or other designated manager will contact you within 5 working days to discuss the matter further and try to agree a positive resolution. Where possible the matter will be discussed in person or by telephone. A timescale will be agreed, and the relevant manager will then complete their investigations as quickly as possible. They will feedback to you again in person or by telephone or an agreed means of communication and will then send an outcome letter advising of the outcome and any actions to be taken.</i>	
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	YES	<i>In accordance with timescales set out by the Housing Ombudsman – Stage 1 response – within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint. If this is not going to be</i>	

			<i>possible, an explanation will be offered, and a revised timescale advised. This will not normally exceed a further 10 working days without proper reason. Again, Orchard Housing Society will provide individuals with contact details for the Housing Ombudsman if the extension period is disputed. Where additional complaints are raised during the investigation, these will be incorporated within the Stage 1 response if they are relevant, and the Stage 1 response has not been sent. Where the response has been issued or the additional investigation would cause a delay, the complaint will be logged as a new complaint.</i> Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy p5&6	
6.4	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	<i>As above & Where the grounds of the complaint are not clear, the Society will seek further clarity from the individual and may need to offer a revised timescale.</i> Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy – p6	

6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	YES	<i>As per point 6.3</i>	
6.6	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>Where the outcome of the complaint is clear and can be communicated quickly and clearly, then the Society will do so although the actions to resolve the complaint may still be in progress. The Society will keep individuals updated.</i> P6 Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
6.7	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	<i>At Stage 1 the Society will define and set out :</i> ✓ <i>the complaint stage</i> ✓ <i>the complaint definition</i> ✓ <i>the decision on the complaint</i> ✓ <i>the reasons for any decisions made</i> ✓ <i>the details of any remedy offered to put things right</i> ✓ <i>details of any outstanding actions</i> ✓ <i>details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman</i> P6 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	

6.8	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	<i>Where additional complaints are raised during the investigation, these will be incorporated within the Stage 1 response if they are relevant, and the Stage 1 response has not been sent. Where the response has been issued or the additional investigation would cause a delay, the complaint will be logged as a new complaint.</i> P5&6 Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
6.9	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	<i>As per 6.7 and Should individuals remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure, they proceed to Stage 2 as follows below. This should be submitted within 10 working days. If the request to escalate is not received within 10 working days, the matter will be closed.</i> P5&6 Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	

Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.10	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	<i>Stage 2 Complaint – Review & Decision</i> <i>Where individuals remain dissatisfied with the outcome and response of the Stage 1 investigation, they may request for their complaint to be reviewed. They should advise why they do not agree with the outcome of Stage 1 and advise where possible the outcome that is sought. This will be undertaken by the Chief Executive or other nominated Senior Manager or Board member in her absence, who will complete a further investigation as quickly as possible. An outcome letter will then be sent detailing any actions to be taken. The outcome of the review stage will be final.</i> <i>In accordance with timescales set</i>	

			<i>out by the Housing Ombudsman – Stage 2 decision response will be offered within 20 working days from the request to escalate. Again, if this is not going to be possible an explanation will be offered and revised timescale advised. This will again not normally exceed a further 10 working days without proper reason.</i> <i>Stage 2 responses will include the following</i> ✓ <i>the complaint stage</i> ✓ <i>the complaint definition</i> ✓ <i>the decision on the complaint</i> ✓ <i>the reasons for any decisions made</i> ✓ <i>the details of any remedy offered to put things right</i> ✓ <i>details of any outstanding actions</i> ✓ <i>details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman</i> <i>Orchard Housing Society will advise tenants throughout the process of their rights to access the Housing</i>	
--	--	--	--	--

			<i>Ombudsman Service throughout the investigation of their complaint and not only when the Society's procedure is at an end. Individuals will be informed of their right to seek impartial advice from the Ombudsman's dispute support advisors.</i> <i>This is the end of Orchard Housing Society's internal complaints procedure.</i> P6&7 Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	YES	<i>As per 6.10</i>	
6.12	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>As per 6.10</i>	
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	YES	<i>This will be undertaken by the Chair or other member in her absence, who will complete a further investigation as quickly as possible</i>	

6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	YES	<i>As per 6.10</i>	
6.15	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	<i>As per 6.10</i>	
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	YES	<i>As per 6.10</i>	
6.17	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>Where the outcome of the complaint is clear and can be communicated quickly and clearly, then the Society will do so although the actions to resolve the complaint may still be in progress. The Society will keep individuals updated.</i> P7 Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions,	YES	<i>As per 6.10</i>	

	referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.			
6.19	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 per 6.10</i>	
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	YES	<i>As per 6.10</i>	

Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	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	<i>What remedies will Orchard Housing Society offer ?</i> <i>Where something has gone wrong,</i>	

	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.		<i>Orchard Housing Society will acknowledge this and will advise of the actions already taken or intends to take to rectify matters these remedies may include,</i> ✓ <i>Offering a full and unreserved apology</i> ✓ <i>Acknowledging where things have gone wrong.</i> ✓ <i>Providing an explanation, assistance, or reasons</i> ✓ <i>Taking action in the event of a delay</i> ✓ <i>Reconsidering or changing a decision</i> ✓ <i>Amending a record, adding a correction or addendum</i> ✓ <i>Providing a financial remedy</i> ✓ <i>Changing policies, practices, or procedures.</i> P5 – Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	YES	<i>The remedy offered will reflect the impact on the individual as a result of any fault or error identified.</i> P5 Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	

7.3	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	<i>Timescales in respect of remedies offered will be included both within Stage 1 and if escalated Stage 2 responses.</i> P5 Orchard Housing Society Complaints Policy	
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	YES	<i>As per 7.1, 7.2 & 7.3 as per the Code</i>	

Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	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	<i>To be reported on www.orchardhousing.co.uk</i>	

8.2	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	<i>As above</i>	
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes		
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	<i>Currently not applicable</i>	
8.5	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>Currently not applicable</i>	

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	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	<i>P8 OHS Complaints Policy</i>	
9.2	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	<i>P8 OHS Complaints Policy</i>	
9.3	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	<i>P8 OHS Complaints Policy</i>	
9.4	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	<i>The lead Complaints Officer is the Tenancy Support Manager</i>	

9.5	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>A member of the Management Committee was elected – June 2024 P8 OHS Complaints Policy</i>	
9.6	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>P8 OHS Complaints Policy</i>	
9.7	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	<i>P8 OHS Complaints Policy</i>	

9.8	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	<i>P8 OHS Complaints Policy</i>	
-----	--	-----	---------------------------------	--