

## Appendix A: Self-assessment form

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.

**Last updated 28/06/2024.**

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## Section 1: Definition of a complaint

### Code provision: 1.2

#### Code requirement:

A complaint must be defined as: *‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.’*

#### Comply:

Yes

#### Evidence:

- [Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/feedback-and-complaints-policy)
- [Complaints - South Cambs District Council \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/complaints-south-cambs-district-council)

#### Commentary / explanation:

On review and update of the council complaint policy (September/October 2021 and May 2022), it had been decided to integrate the Housing Complaints policy into the Council’s overall Corporate Complaints Policy, and to use just one complaint definition which is the one recommended by the Local Government & Social Care

Ombudsman as this also covers everything that is included in the Housing Ombudsman complaint definition:

**Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman definition of a complaint at that time was:**

“An expression of dissatisfaction about a council service (whether that service is provided directly by the council or by a contractor or partner) that requires a response.”

Advice received from the Housing Ombudsman has confirmed that this is acceptable.

As from the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2024 the Local Government Social Care Ombudsman has updated their processes in line with the New Complaint Handling Code which has seen an amendment to the definition to a complaint.

We are currently reviewing our complaint policy and will look to amend so to fully comply with the new complaint handling code 2024.

### **Code provision: 1.3**

#### **Code requirement:**

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.

#### **Comply:**

Yes

#### **Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scams.gov.uk\)](https://www.scams.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)



### **Commentary / explanation:**

- See our complaint policy page 4 - 'Feedback'.
- See our complaint policy page 11 - 'Third Parties'.

### **Code provision: 1.4**

#### **Code requirement:**

Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.

#### **Comply:**

Yes

#### **Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

### **Commentary / explanation:**

See our complaint policy pages 3 – 5.

### **Code provision: 1.5**

#### **Code requirement:**

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

**Commentary / Explanation**

See our complaint policy page 4.

If a tenant / resident is dissatisfied with the response to their Service request, we encourage them to provide feedback, and if they wish they can have their case considered as a complaint.

**Code provision: 1.6****Code requirement:**

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

**Commentary / Explanation:**

See our complaint policy page 4.

We encourage our tenants / residents to provide feedback good or bad and if they have chosen to leave their contact details, we will contact them to ask whether,

they wish their case to be considered as a complaint.

We will be reviewing our survey process to ensure we are capturing satisfaction levels on key transactions. As part of this review, we will look to add a link / information of our complaint policy on all relevant surveys.

## Section 2: Exclusions

### Code provision: 2.1

#### Code requirement:

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

#### Comply:

Yes

#### Evidence:

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)

#### Commentary / Explanation

Covered within our complaint policy under 'Other Exceptions' pages 5 & 6.

### Code provision: 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.

Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

**Commentary / Explanation:**

Circumstances not dealt with under the complaints handling processes are detailed within our complaint policy under 'Other Exceptions' pages 5 & 6

**Code provision: 2.3**

**Code requirement:**

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

**Commentary / Explanation:**

We will contact the customer and provide an explanation. See pages 5 & 6 of our complaint policy.

## Code provision: 2.4

### Code requirement:

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.

### Comply:

Yes

### Evidence:

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

### Commentary / Explanation:

We will contact the customer and provide an explanation. See pages 5 & 6 of our complaint policy.

## Code provision: 2.5

### Code requirement:

Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.

### Comply:

Yes

### Evidence:

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

### **Commentary / Explanation:**

All complaints are reviewed on their own merit and the complainants' individual circumstances.

## **Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness**

### **Code provision: 3.1**

#### **Code requirement:**

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.

#### **Comply:**

Yes

#### **Evidence:**

- [Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/feedback-and-complaints-policy)
- [Tenant and Leaseholder news - South Cambs District Council \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/tenant-and-leaseholder-news)

#### **Commentary / explanation:**

- See our complaint policy pages 6 -10.
- We have published in Tenant & Leaseholder newsletters.

## Code provision 3.2

### Code requirement:

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.

### Comply:

Yes

### Evidence:

- [Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

### Commentary / explanation:

See our complaint policy pages 6-8 complaint stages and Appendix C – ‘responsibilities’ page 19 & 20.

Complaints can be submitted through the My South Cambs customer portal. Where customers require support to submit a complaint through the customer portal route, this can be provided by calling our Customer Contact Service. Where a communication is received by other means (for example, Face to Face, an email, letter or social media) and it is clearly intended as a complaint, we will set this up as a complaint on the My South Cambs customer portal, contacting the customer for more information if this is required.

## Code provision: 3.3

### Code requirement:

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scamb.gov.uk\)](#)

**Commentary/ explanation:**

We encourage customers to provide feedback, whether good or bad, about the services that they have received. If they so wish their case can be considered as a complaint. Feedback is used to plan how we will deliver and improve our services going forward.

See our complaint policy page 4.

**Code provision: 3.4****Code requirement:**

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

- [Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scamb.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Complaints - South Cambs District Council \(scamb.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Housing complaints and compliments - South Cambs District Council \(scamb.gov.uk\)](#)



### **Commentary / explanation:**

See links to our Housing complaint and corporate complaint website pages both have interlinks that take you to the same complaint policy.

### **Code provision: 3.5**

#### **Code requirement:**

The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.

#### **Comply:**

Yes

#### **Evidence:**

- [Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/feedback-and-complaints-policy)
- [Housing complaints and compliments - South Cambs District Council \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/housing-complaints-and-compliments-south-cambs-district-council)

### **Commentary / explanation:**

See our complaint policy page 16, confirming how we monitor and report our performance.

The code is published on our Housing website page which has a link to our complaint policy and details information regarding the Ombudsman.

### **Code provision 3.6**

#### **Code requirement:**

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

**Commentary / explanation:**

See our complaints policy – Page 10-11 covering ‘Third Parties’

**Code provision: 3.7**

**Code requirement:**

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

**Commentary / explanation:**

See our complaints policy page 11 - Details are on our webpage, within our complaint policy and response letter templates.

## Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

### Code Provision: 4.1

#### Code requirement:

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.

#### Comply:

Yes

#### Evidence:

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scams.gov.uk\)](https://www.scams.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)

#### Commentary / explanation:

See our complaint policy pages 6-8 complaint stages and Appendix C - responsibilities' page 19 & 20.

For our organisation, a 'Complaints Officer' will be referred to as 'Responding Officer' these officers job roles are not dedicated to just complaint handling, they will be Service Manager (Stage 1) and Head of Service (Stage 2)

### Code provision 4.2

#### Code requirement:

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

**Commentary / explanation:**

See our complaint policy pages 6-8 complaint stages and Appendix C – ‘responsibilities’ page 19 & 20.

For our organisation, a ‘Complaints Officer’ will be referred to as ‘Responding Officer’ these officers job roles are not dedicated to just complaint handling, they will be Service Manager (Stage 1) and Head of Service (Stage 2).

**Code provision: 4.3**

**Code requirement:**

Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

**Commentary / explanation:**

We have template letters to help staff ensure all relevant wording and points are covered.

- 'Our Commitments' page 14
- 'Council Values and the Complaints Handling Process' page 17
- 'Appendix C – Responsibilities' pages 19 & 20 - We provide staff training and updates in team meeting.

## Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

### Code provision: 5.1

#### Code requirement:

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.

#### Comply:

Yes

#### Evidence:

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scams.gov.uk\)](https://www.scams.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)

#### Commentary / explanation:

On review and update of the council complaint policy (September/October 2021 and May 2022), it was decided to integrate the Housing Complaints policy in to the one corporate document.

### Code provision: 5.2

#### Code requirement:

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)

**Commentary / explanation:**

We do not have a 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint stage.'

**Code provision: 5.3**

**Code requirement:**

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)

**Commentary / explanation:**

We have 2 stages; the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage is the Ombudsman.

**Code provision: 5.4**

**Code requirement:**

Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g., a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage

complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scams.gov.uk\)](https://www.scams.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)

**Commentary / explanation:**

Complaints received by our contractors will be referred to us for logging, monitoring and responding so to ensure they are in line with the code.

**Code provision 5.5**

**Code requirement:**

Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scams.gov.uk\)](https://www.scams.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)

**Commentary / explanation:**

Complaints received by our contractors will be referred to us for logging, monitoring and responding so to ensure they are inline with the code.

## Code provision: 5.6

### Code requirement:

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.

### Comply:

Yes

### Evidence:

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)

### Commentary / explanation:

We do seek clarification from the complainant as and when needed.  
See our complaint policy page 9.

## Code provision: 5.7

### Code requirement:

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.

### Comply:

Yes

### Evidence:

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)



### **Commentary / explanation:**

We do seek clarification from the complainant as and when needed.  
See our complaint policy page 9.

### **Code provision: 5.8**

#### **Code requirement:**

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.

#### **Comply:**

Yes

#### **Evidence:**

[Housing complaints and compliments - South Cambs District Council \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

### **Commentary / explanation:**

See our complaint policy:

- 'Council Values and the Complaints Handling Process' page 17
- 'Appendix C – Responsibilities' pages 19 & 20

## **Code provision: 5.9**

### **Code requirement:**

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.

### **Comply:**

Yes

### **Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)

### **Commentary / explanation:**

See our complaints policy – The Three Stages of the Complaints Process’ pages 6 – 10.

We aim to resolve complaints within their timescales but if not possible to meet this target, we will inform the customer of a revised and realistic target timescale at the earliest opportunity and aim to extend by no more than 10 days.

## **Code provision: 5.10**

### **Code requirement:**

Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.

### **Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Equality Scheme - South Cambs District Council \(scamb.gov.uk\)](https://www.scamb.gov.uk)

**Commentary / explanation:**

See page 15 of our complaint policy and our Equalities Scheme webpage.

**Code provision: 5.11****Code requirement:**

Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scamb.gov.uk\)](https://www.scamb.gov.uk)

**Commentary / explanation:**

See our complaint policy pages 5 & 6 'Other Exceptions'.

**Code provision 5.12****Code requirement:**

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

**Commentary / explanation:**

See our complaint policy – ‘Appendix C – Responsibilities’ page 19 & 20.

**Code provision: 5.13****Code requirement:**

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

**Commentary / explanation:**

- ‘Council Values and the Complaints Handling Process’ Working Together page 17.
- ‘Appendix C – Responsibilities’ pages 19 & 20.
- Reasonable adjustments page 15.

## Code provision: 5:14

### Code requirement:

Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.

### Comply:

Yes

### Evidence:

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scams.gov.uk\)](https://www.scams.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)

### Commentary / explanation:

See our complaint policy:

- 'Vexatious or Unreasonably Persistent Complaints' pages 12-14
- 'Appendix B – Examples of Unreasonable Actions and Behaviours' page 1.

## Code provision: 5:15

### Code requirement:

Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

### Comply:

Yes

### Evidence:

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scams.gov.uk\)](https://www.scams.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)

### **Commentary / explanation:**

See our complaint policy - 'Designating a Complaint as Vexatious or Unreasonably Persistent' pages 12 – 14.

## **Section 6: Complaint stages**

### **Stage 1**

#### **Code provision: 6.1**

#### **Code requirement:**

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.

#### **Comply:**

Yes

#### **Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)

### **Commentary / explanation:**

- 'Council Values and the Complaints Handling Process' Working Together page 17.
- 'Appendix C – Responsibilities' pages 19 & 20
- Reasonable adjustments page 15

## Code provision: 6.2

### Code requirement:

Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure **within five working days of the complaint being received**.

### Comply:

Yes

### Evidence:

[Contact us - South Cambs District Council \(scams.gov.uk\)](https://www.scams.gov.uk/contact-us)

### Commentary / explanation:

See link to our 'Contact us' website page where under 'Our customer service standards' it confirms we acknowledge complaints within 3 working days and has a link to our full complaint policy.

We are currently reviewing our complaint policy and will look at if we retain 3 working days or increase to 5. Whichever is agreed we will ensure that it is added to our full policy document.

## Code provision: 6.3

### Code requirement:

Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints **within 10 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged.

### Comply:

Yes

### Evidence:

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scams.gov.uk\)](https://www.scams.gov.uk/feedback-and-complaints-policy)

### **Commentary / explanation:**

See our complaints policy:

The Three Stages of the Complaints Process' pages 6 – 10

The new complaint code has changed their wording from **receipt** to **acknowledged** see below:

response within 10 working days of **receipt** changed to 10 working days of being **acknowledged**.

We are currently reviewing our complaint policy and will look at if we continue to calculate the response due date from receipt or acknowledgement. Whichever is agreed we will ensure that it is added to our full policy document.

### **Code provision: 6.4**

#### **Code requirement:**

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.

#### **Comply:**

Yes

#### **Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)

### **Commentary / explanation:**

See our complaints policy: The Three Stages of the Complaints Process' pages 7 – 8.



## **Code provision: 6.5**

### **Code requirement:**

When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.

### **Comply:**

Yes

### **Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)

### **Commentary / explanation:**

Our current policy on pages 7 – 8 covers extensions.

Page 11 - confirms that in addition to investigating Stage 3 complaints the Housing Ombudsman and Local Government Ombudsman services can also be contacted at any point during the complaints.

process for advice, guidance or support.

Our holding letter templates have been updated to ensure ombudsman details are provided when an extension of time is provided.

## **Code provision: 6.6**

### **Code requirement:**

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

Not applicable.

**Commentary / explanation:**

This is an area we have been working on particularly with regards to repair and maintenance repairs, ensuring a response is sent once an action plan is in-place, instead of when work has been completed.

We have template letters to help staff ensure all relevant wording and points are covered.

**Code provision: 6.7**

**Code requirement:**

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

Not applicable.

**Commentary / explanation:**

We have template letters to help staff ensure all relevant wording and points are covered.

## Code provision: 6.8

### Code requirement:

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.

### Comply:

Yes

### Evidence:

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

### Commentary / explanation:

See our complaints policy page 5.

If additional complaints are relevant, they will be added, but if not, they will be investigated as a separate matter/complaint.

## Code provision: 6.9

### Code requirement:

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

Not applicable.

**Commentary / explanation:**

We have template letters to help staff ensure all relevant wording and points are covered.

**Stage 2:**

**Code provision: 6.10**

**Code requirement:**

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

**Commentary / explanation:**

See our complaints policy page 8.

## **Code provision: 6.11**

### **Code requirement:**

Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaint's procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.

### **Comply:**

Yes

### **Evidence:**

[Contact us - South Cambs District Council \(scamb.gov.uk\)](https://www.scamb.gov.uk)

### **Commentary / explanation:**

See link to our 'Contact us' website page where under 'Our customer service standards' it confirms we acknowledge complaints within 3 working days and has a link to our full complaint policy.

We are currently reviewing our complaint policy and will look at if we retain 3 working days or increase to 5. Whichever is agreed we will ensure that it is added to our full policy document.

## **Code provision: 6.12**

### **Code requirement:**

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.

### **Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scams.gov.uk\)](https://www.scams.gov.uk)

**Commentary / explanation:**

See our complaints policy page 8.

**Code provision: 6.13**

**Code requirement:**

The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scams.gov.uk\)](https://www.scams.gov.uk)

**Commentary / explanation:**

See our complaints policy page 8.

**Code provision: 6.14**

**Code requirement:**

Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 **within 20 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged.

**Comply:**

Yes

## Evidence:

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

## Commentary / explanation:

See our complaints policy:

The Three Stages of the Complaints Process' pages 6 – 10

We aim to resolve stage 2 complaints within 20 working days of receipt.

The new complaint code has changed their wording from **receipt** to **acknowledged** see below:

response within 20 working days of **receipt** changed to 20 working days of being **acknowledged**.

We are currently reviewing our complaint policy and will look at if we continue to calculate the response due date from receipt or acknowledgement. Whichever is agreed we will ensure that it is added to our full policy document.

## Code provision: 6.15

### Code requirement:

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.

### Comply:

Yes

## Evidence:

Not applicable.

### **Commentary / explanation:**

See our policy page 8.

We aim to resolve stage 2 complaints within 20 working days but if not possible to meet this target, we will inform the customer of a revised and realistic target timescale at the earliest opportunity and aim to extend by no more than 10 working days.

The new complaint code has increased the days from 10 to 20 working days.

We are currently reviewing our complaint policy and will look at if we continue with 10 working days or increase to 20. Whichever is agreed we will ensure that it is added to our full policy document.

### **Code provision: 6.16**

#### **Code requirement:**

When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.

#### **Comply:**

Yes

#### **Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

### **Commentary / explanation:**

Our currently policy on pages 7 – 8 covers extensions. The Ombudsman details are included with in our Stage 2 process.

We are currently reviewing our complaint policy and template letters so will ensure ombudsman details are provided when an extension of time is required.



## Code provision: 6.17

### Code requirement:

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.

### Comply:

Yes

### Evidence:

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scams.gov.uk\)](https://www.scams.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)

### Commentary / explanation:

This is an area we have been working on particularly with regards to repair and maintenance repairs, ensuring a response is sent once an action plan is in-place, instead of when work has been completed.

We have template letters to help staff ensure all relevant wording and points are covered. See our policy pages 9 – 12.

## Code provision: 6.18

### Code requirement:

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.

### Comply:

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

**Commentary / explanation:**

We have template letters to help staff ensure all relevant wording and points are covered. See our policy pages 9 – 12.

**Code provision: 6.19****Code requirement:**

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

**Commentary / explanation:**

We have template letters to help staff ensure all relevant wording and points are covered. See our policy pages 9 – 12.

## Code provision: 6.20

### Code requirement:

Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.

### Comply:

Yes

### Evidence:

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scams.gov.uk\)](https://www.scams.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)

### Commentary / explanation:

See our complaint policy pages 6-8 complaint stages and Appendix C – 'responsibilities' page 19 & 20.

## Section 7: Putting things right

### Code provision: 7.1

### Code requirement:

Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:

- Apologising;
- Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;
- Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;
- Taking action if there has been delay;
- Reconsidering or changing a decision;
- Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;
- Providing a financial remedy;
- Changing policies, procedures or practices.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

**Commentary / explanation:**

We have template letters to help staff ensure all relevant wording and points are covered.

- 'Our Commitments' page 14
- 'Council Values and the Complaints Handling Process' page 17
- 'Appendix C – Responsibilities' pages 19 & 20.

**Code provision: 7.2****Code requirement:**

Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

**Commentary / explanation:**

Our policy clearing sets out our timeframes, commitments and reasonable adjustments.

As well as our Council Values and Responsibilities.

### **Code provision: 7.3**

#### **Code requirement:**

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.

#### **Comply:**

Yes

#### **Evidence:**

Yes

#### **Commentary / explanation:**

We will always look to work with the tenant / resident to ensure we come to a mutual agreement to the proposed remedy.

See our policy page 14 and Appendix A – our commitments and values.

### **Code provision: 7.4**

#### **Code requirement:**

Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.

#### **Comply:**

Yes

## **Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

## **Commentary / explanation:**

We would also look towards the Housing Ombudsman guidance as an additional means to ensure any remedies are fairly considered.

See our policy page 14 and Appendix A - our commitments and values.

## **Section 8: Putting things right**

### **Code provision: 8.1**

#### **Code requirement:**

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.

#### **Comply:**

Yes

## **Evidence:**

- [Tenant working groups - South Cambs District Council \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)
- [Browse meetings - Housing Engagement Board \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk)
- [Housing performance and tenant satisfaction measures - South Cambs District Council \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)
- [Our Performance - South Cambs District Council \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

## **Commentary / explanation:**

Following each self-assessment, we will

- Report the outcome to the Head of Housing; Housing Service Managers; Tenant led Housing Performance Panel and Housing Engagement Board
- Publish outcomes on our website.
- Include in our Annual Report / Tenant and Leaseholder Newsletters
- Quarterly Performance Management meetings are held with Housing Service Managers and the Head of Housing.
- Complaints performance is also monitored on a Corporate basis through the Council's Cabinet and Corporate Management Team

We are currently reviewing our Tenant led performance Panels to make them more focused on the new TSM's and monitoring performance; Our Complaint policy and Performance website page(s) to continue to improve on how we review and publish our performance.

## **Code provision: 8.2**

### **Code requirement:**

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

- [Tenant working groups - South Cambs District Council \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/tenant-working-groups)
- [Housing performance and tenant satisfaction measures - South Cambs District Council \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/housing-performance-and-tenant-satisfaction-measures)
- [Our Performance - South Cambs District Council \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/our-performance)

**Commentary / explanation:**

Our performance in relation to complaints handling is monitored through key performance indicators reported quarterly to Senior Management, Tenant Performance Panels and Councillor committees.

Regular reviews of data and feedback allow the management of complaints handling processes on a day-to-day basis, with learning shared across our services. Reviews also take place in relation to any Stage 3 decision notices that are received, as well as Ombudsman annual review letters.

We are currently reviewing our Tenant led performance Panels; Our Complaint policy and Performance website page(s) to continue to improve on how we review and publish our performance.

**Code provision: 8.3****Code requirement:**

Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.

**Comply:**

Yes



**Evidence:**

[Housing complaints and compliments - South Cambs District Council](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)  
([scambs.gov.uk](https://www.scambs.gov.uk))

**Commentary / explanation:**

The first code was reviewed, completed and published on our website in January 2021, further reviewed and updated December 2021, March 2022, again in October 2022 and December 2023.

**Code provision: 8.4****Code requirement:**

Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

Not applicable.

**Commentary / explanation:**

This will be actioned as and when need needed.

**Code provision 8.5****Code requirement:**

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

Not applicable.

**Commentary / explanation:**

This will be actioned as and when needed.

## **Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement**

### **Code provision: 9.1**

**Code requirement:**

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scams.gov.uk\)](https://www.scams.gov.uk/Feedback-and-Complaints-Policy)

**Commentary / explanation:**

See our policy page 16.- We value complaints as an opportunity to identify areas for improvement, forming the basis for continual organisational, service, and individual development.

We are trialling a newly introduced survey for obtaining seeking feedback and a more robust learning from complaints process looking at how best to communicate with our tenants with the help from our resident involvement groups.

Details of complaints are scrutinised by the Housing Service Management Team on a quarterly basis to identify trends and areas for wider service improvement, training, etc.

## **Code provision 9.2**

### **Code requirement:**

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.

### **Comply:**

Yes

### **Evidence:**

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

### **Commentary / explanation:**

See our policy page 16.- We value complaints as an opportunity to identify areas for improvement, forming the basis for continual organisational, service, and individual development.

Details of complaints are scrutinised by the Housing Service Management Team on a quarterly basis to identify trends and areas for wider service improvement, training, etc.

We are in the process of reviewing our corporate procedure to introduce a more robust learning from complaints process across the Council.

## Code provision 9.3

### Code requirement:

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.

### Comply:

Yes

### Evidence:

[Feedback and Complaints Policy \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

### Commentary / explanation:

See our policy page 16.- We value complaints as an opportunity to identify areas for improvement, forming the basis for continual organisational, service, and individual development.

Details of complaints are scrutinised by the Housing Service Management Team on a quarterly basis to identify trends and areas for wider service improvement, training, etc.

We are in the process of reviewing our corporate procedure to introduce a more robust learning from complaints process across the Council.

## Code provision: 9.4

### Code requirement:

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

Not applicable

**Commentary / explanation:**

Head of Housing has been appointed.

**Code provision: 9.5**

**Code requirement:**

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').

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

- [Browse meetings - Housing Engagement Board \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](https://modern.gov/engagements/boards-and-committees/housing-engagement-board)
- [Browse meetings - Cabinet \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](https://modern.gov/engagements/cabinet)

**Commentary / explanation:**

Lead Cabinet member for Housing has been appointed as MRC.

## Code provision: 9.6

### Code requirement:

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.

### Comply:

Yes

### Evidence:

- [Browse meetings - Housing Engagement Board \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- [Browse meetings - Cabinet \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

### Commentary / explanation:

Lead Cabinet member for Housing has been appointed as MRC, and will receive / have access to all suitable performance information quarterly and annual for review and reporting of findings at Housing Engagement Board and Cabinet meetings.

## Code provision: 9.6

### Code requirement:

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

- [Browse meetings - Housing Engagement Board \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/Meetings/Housing-Engagement-Board)
- [Browse meetings - Cabinet \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/Meetings/Cabinet)

**Commentary / explanation:**

Lead Cabinet member for Housing has been appointed as MRC, and will receive / have access to all suitable performance information quarterly and annual for review and reporting of findings at Housing Engagement Board and Cabinet meetings.

**Code provision: 9.8**

**Code requirement:**

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.

**Comply:**

Yes

**Evidence:**

[Housing complaints and compliments - South Cambs District Council \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/Information/Complaints-and-Compliments)

**Commentary / explanation:**

See our policy - 'Appendix C – Responsibilities' pages 19 & 20.