

## Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024 – City of Liverpool YMCA (Incorporated) T/A YMCA Together

### Introduction

There are challenging times ahead for all social housing landlords with the introduction of new and exciting legislation and regulation. Part of the new regulations is the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code.

As the responsible people for social housing complaints for the City of Liverpool YMCA (Incorporated) T/A YMCA Together, we are pleased to introduce our first Complaints Annual Report and Service Improvement Plan.

We have worked directly with staff, residents and service users to understand our performance in managing complaints and we have carried out a Self-Assessment to understand the progress YMCA Together has made against compliance with The Code, more details of this can be found in the report.

We are committed to ensuring a positive complaints culture exists throughout YMCA Together, in which we listen to our residents and service users and learn from their experiences. Learning from complaints and making service improvements as a result of them is one of the most important parts of the complaints handling process. This report contains examples of how YMCA Together have learned from complaints. We will work with staff, residents and service users over the coming year to continue to learn from complaints and make improvements to the way we deliver services.

It is good to see that there has been an honest and open assessment of the complaints service provided by YMCA Together against The Code which has resulted in agreed actions to improve our performance and ensure we remain compliant with The Code. Complaint volumes are increasing year on year throughout the sector, we anticipate this trend will continue as we encourage residents and service users to tell us when they think we have done something wrong. We are committed to having meaningful oversight of complaints and we will be monitoring the service improvement plan over the coming months to ensure we make the improvements needed to deliver great services and put things right quickly if things don't quite go to plan.

### ***Tony Allen***

Trustee - City of Liverpool YMCA (Incorporated) and Member Responsible for Complaints

### ***Jon Metcalfe***

Deputy Chief Executive – City of Liverpool YMCA (Incorporated) and Complaints Officer

## Summary

YMCA Together undertakes an annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code (Copy at end of this document). An updated version of the code was published in February 2024, and we completed an assessment against this.

It showed an overall good level of compliance. However there was one outstanding requirement, which is to produce an Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and for this report to be published on our website.

This report provides the information to fulfil that outstanding requirement. It set out a summary of the number and types of complaints received by each YMCA Together service. It also outlines:

- ▶ YMCA Together is receiving very low levels of complaints, but has very high numbers of service requests which are supported by staff being available 24/7 across the majority of services
- ▶ That all complaints raised were resolved at Stage 1 of the complaints process
- ▶ That no complaints were made to the Housing Ombudsman
- ▶ That 100% of Stage 1 complaints received a written acknowledgement of the complaints within the 5 working days target
- ▶ That 89% of Stage 1 complaints received a full response to their complaints within the 10-day target

## Background

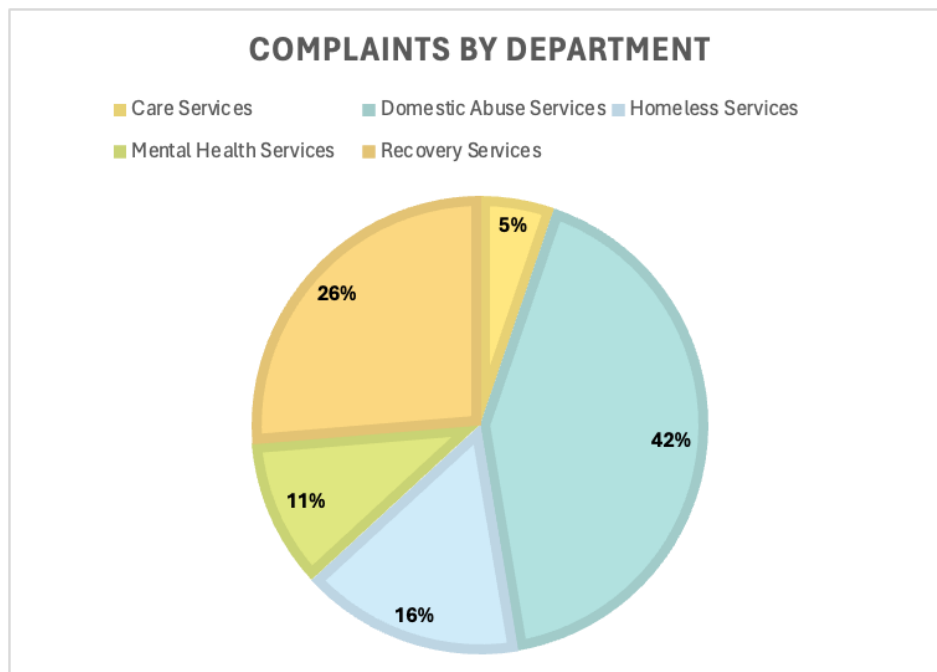
YMCA Together welcomes all feedback from residents and other service users, as it provides us with an opportunity to continually improve what we do and how we do it. Any comments, compliments and complaints received are managed through the YMCA Together Complaints Policy. The Policy and process was reviewed and updated in June 2024 after we carried out a self-audit against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. As per the 'Code' the policy reflects a two stage complaints process, ensuring all complaints are investigated thoroughly and, if required, the findings reviewed. After this point, should a complainant remain dissatisfied with the outcome, the policy supports people to escalate their complaint further to the independent Housing Ombudsman or other relevant body, such as the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Care Quality Commission.

In Summer 2024, the Government's new Social Housing (Regulation) Act came into force, designed to deliver the aims of the 2021 Social Housing White Paper around strengthening consumer standards, improve resident involvement and tackle poor performing landlords. The Act further strengthens the powers of the Regulator for Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman, to provide more support to residents and ensure housing providers were managing feedback effectively.

This report provides a summary of the number and types of complaints that we have received in the past year, as well as an overview of the service improvements made as a result.

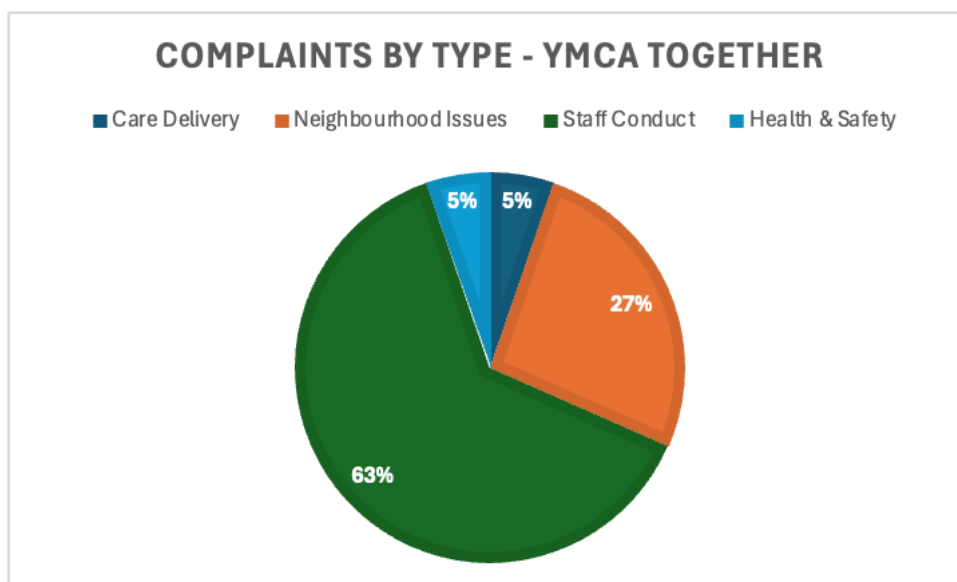
## Summary of Complaints Received

Service (Department)	Stage 1	Stage 2	Ombudsman
Hestia House (Care)	1	0	0
Grace House (Domestic Abuse Services)	5	0	0
FAE House (Domestic Abuse Services)	3	0	0
Leeds Street (Homeless Services)	1	0	0
Florence House (Homeless Services)	2	0	0
Nightingale House (Mental Health Services)	1	0	0
Newby House (Mental Health Services)	1	0	0
RISE (Recovery Services)	5	0	0



## Common Complaint Types by YMCA Together Departments

Service (Department)	Complaints by Type
Care Services	1 – Care Delivery
Domestic Abuse Services	4 – Neighbourhood Issues 3 – Staff Conduct 1 – Health and Safety
Homeless Services	1 – Neighbourhood Issues 2 – Staff Conduct
Mental Health Services	2 – Staff Conduct
Recovery Services	5 – Staff Conduct



YMCA Together had a total of 19 complaints all of which were resolved satisfactorily at Stage 1 of the complaints process, with no complaints escalating to Stage 2 of the process.

### Engagement with the Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman will only investigate a complaint when it has been through our own internal two stage process. We did not have any complaints that progressed for investigation by the Housing Ombudsman.

### Oversight of Complaints

All complaints received are overseen by YMCA Together’s Complaints Officer – the Deputy Chief Executive. This ensures a strong level of oversight and control, helping us to identify worrying patterns and opportunities for service improvement. On a weekly basis, all new

complaints are reported to the Complaints Officer providing a comprehensive picture of what feedback is coming into the organisation.

In addition, a report detailing feedback information is shared with the YMCA Together Board of Trustees each quarter. Performance against the complaints is also reported as an element of wider performance dashboard provided to the Board of Trustees.

To support our commitment to ensuring greater transparency with residents, we share a complaints summary with the Service User Panel each quarter.

In the last 12 months, 100% of the complaints received by YMCA Together were responded to within the target timescale of 10 working days. This places us above the benchmark average of 93%.

Of the 19 complaints received by YMCA Together, 89% were responded to within 10 working days, with 11% falling below the target timeframe.

Although YMCA Together received a low number of complaints in the last 12 months, there were a high number of ‘service requests’ made to staff at YMCA Together, which 482 requests made in the last 12 month, which may be an indicator as to why residents and service users have not needed to make complaints as they have access to staff on site 24 hours a day and staff are able to resolve issues promptly.

In the recent YMCA Together Tenant Satisfaction Perception Survey, residents were asked how satisfied they were ‘with the landlord’s approach to handling complaints’ and 73% of respondents said that they were either satisfied or very satisfied. 84% of respondents also said that they were either satisfied or very satisfied that their landlord ‘treat you fairly and with respect’ and 73% satisfied or very satisfied that their landlord ‘listens to your views and acts upon them’.

### Using insights from complaints to improve services

When residents have taken the time to provide us with feedback, it is important that we value this feedback and use it to inform service improvements. The table below shows some of the trends identified through the feedback given, along with some examples of the actions taken as a result.

Trend Identified	Actions taken to improve services as a result
<p><b>Communication</b> – a number of complaints were around staff conduct during the performance of their duties. It appears that residents are not being made fully aware of the services we provide, and this is causing some levels of frustration with residents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Review and update to our Resident Handbook to provide residents with a better understanding of the services and support we provide written in a format better suited to be fully understood by our residents</li> </ul>
<p><b>Neighbourhood Issues</b> – a number of complaints were around low level anti-social behaviour, particularly in our communal living homes, and the perception that YMCA Together was</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Introduction of the Good Neighbours Agreement, coproduced with service users, to help staff to support residents to better understand and work towards being a ‘good neighbour’ in our services and in the wider</li> </ul>

not doing enough to make people aware of their responsibilities and expected conduct in such accommodation

community

**City of Liverpool YMCA (Incorporated) T/A YMCA Together – December 2024**

**HOS Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment**

**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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	YMCA Together Complaints Policy states on Page 2 - <i>“An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by YMCA Together, its staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident, service user or group of residents or service users.”</i>
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy states on Page 2 - <i>‘We do not expect people to have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such.’</i> Policy states on Page 4 – <i>‘Anyone can make a complaint on behalf of a YMCA Together service user’.</i>
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy states on Page 2 – <i>‘YMCA Together will endeavour to recognise the difference between a service request (pre-complaint), survey feedback compliment and a formal complaint and take appropriate steps to resolve the issue for service users as early as possible’.</i>

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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy states on Page 2 – ‘YMCA Together will endeavour to recognise the difference between a service request (pre-complaint), survey feedback compliment and a formal complaint and take appropriate steps to resolve the issue for service users as early as possible’.
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy states on Page 2 – ‘YMCA Together will endeavour to recognise the difference between a service request (pre-complaint), survey feedback compliment and a formal complaint and take appropriate steps to resolve the issue for service users as early as possible’.

## 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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy states on Page 3 – ‘ <i>If we decide not to accept a complaint because of the above reasons we will explain and evidence our reasoning with the person who has raised the issue.</i> ’
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	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy states on Page 3 – ‘ <i>Complaints should be made within a reasonable period which would normally be within 12 months of the matter occurring</i> ’



	<p>exclusions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.</li> </ul>			<p><i>‘There are some instances where the issue raised will not be dealt with via the complaints process, these are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>If the complaint is relating to matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.</i></li> <li>▶ <i>If the complaint relates to an ongoing legal matter.’</i></li> </ul>
2.3	<p>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.</p>	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	<p>Policy on Page 3 states – <i>‘Complaints should be made within a reasonable period which would normally be within 12 months of the matter occurring. In exceptional circumstances we may decide to respond to a complaint outside of this timescale.’</i></p>
2.4	<p>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.</p>	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	<p>Policy on Page 3 states – <i>‘If we decide not to accept a complaint because of the above reasons we will explain and evidence our reasoning with the person who has raised the issue. We will inform the person of their right to take this decision to either the Housing Ombudsman and/or Adult Social Care.’</i></p>
2.5	<p>Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each</p>	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	<p>Policy on Page 3 states – <i>‘We consider the individual circumstances of every complaint we</i></p>

	complaint.			<i>receive but there may be some instances where the issue raised will not be dealt with via the complaints process'</i>
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### 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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Detailed in Policy on Page 4 it contains the Complaints Procedure and the various channels that people can use to make a complaint.
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 4 states – <i>'we will enable people to make complaints in the following ways: - In person to any YMCA Together staff...'</i> All staff are provided with training on the complaints process during their induction and all sign a copy of the policy and procedure to confirm understanding
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	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 11 states – <i>'It is the position of YMCA Together that high volumes of complaints is not necessarily seen as a negative, it can indicate that our complaints processes</i>

	that residents are unable to complain.			<i>are working well, are well publicised and that people feel confident and able to tell us what is going wrong.'</i>
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Our two stage process is detailed on Page 6 of the Policy and includes details of what will happen at each stage along with timeframes for responding. The policy is published at: <a href="https://ymcattogether.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Compliments-Comments-and-Complaints-Policy.pdf">https://ymcattogether.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Compliments-Comments-and-Complaints-Policy.pdf</a>
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 2 states – <i>'This Policy sets out YMCA Together approach to receiving and handling complaints, ensuring that they are dealt with in a consistent and transparent way, and in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. This policy will be made available to all residents. Guidance and information around making complaints will be included in Resident Handbooks, be published on our website and published on information boards/screens at our services.'</i>
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 5 states – <i>'Anyone can make a complaint on behalf of a YMCA Together service user. If a third party is making a complaint on behalf of a YMCA Together service user, we will require consent from the Complainant before corresponding with them. If a</i>

				<i>resident wishes for a representative to deal with the complaint on their behalf, the representative can attend any meetings with YMCA Together, relating to the complaint.'</i>
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	This is detailed on Page 8 of Policy in section titled 'Referral of Complaints for Independent Review'

## 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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy of Page 9 states – <i>'YMCA Together has a designated Complaints Officer, who has overall responsibility for complaint handling, including liaising with the Housing Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees. The Complaints Officer for YMCA Together is the Deputy Chief Executive.'</i>
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	The Complaints Officer is the Deputy Chief Executive of YMCA Together who has the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.

4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	All staff are provided with training on the complaints process during their induction and all sign a copy of the policy and procedure to confirm understanding
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## 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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	YMCA Together has a single policy for dealing with complaints and the policy states on Page 3 – <i>‘We will ensure that making a complaint will not result in any adverse changes to the services received from us.’</i>
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	We do not have an informal complaints stage but we do encourage the early and local resolution of issues and our policy has a section on responding to ‘Service Requests’ on Page 6
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Our two stage process is detailed on Pages 6 & 7 of the Policy
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	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 2 states – <i>‘YMCA Together has a detailed two stage procedure for dealing with</i>

	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.			<i>complaints which adopts Good Practice Guidance on complaints handling. Any complaints which are handled by a third party (e.g. an approved YMCA Together contractor) will follow this policy and procedure.'</i>
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 2 states – ‘YMCA Together has a detailed two stage procedure for dealing with complaints which adopts Good Practice Guidance on complaints handling. Any complaints which are handled by a third party (e.g. an approved YMCA Together contractor) will follow this policy and procedure.’
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Our Complaints Form which logs complaints at Stage 1 and Stage 2 is included in the Policy as Appendix A and contains a section for ‘Complaint Details’ and ‘Expectations and Desired Outcomes’
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	This is included in the sample ‘Complaint Acknowledgement Letters’ on Pages 14 & 15 of the Policy
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy	Policy on Page 9 states the role of the Complaint Handler and includes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;</li> <li>b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position;</li> <li>c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and</li> <li>d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.</li> </ul>		& Procedure	points a-d
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	<p>Policy on Page 9 states -</p> <p><i>'Where a response to a complaint may fall outside of the timescales as set up in this policy, this must be reported to the Complaint Officer, who must ensure that the resident must be kept informed of any delays and the reasons for those delays. The extension of any complaint must not be more than an additional 10 working days..'</i></p>
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	<p>Policy on Page 9 states YMCA Together will <i>'Make reasonable adjustments for complainants where appropriate under the Equalities Act 2010 to enable the complaints to fully and thoroughly investigated.'</i></p>

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 section 2 of this Code.	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 9 states YMCA Together Complaint Handlers <i>'must not refuse to escalate a complaint to the next stage if the complainant wishes to do so.'</i>
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 9 states YMCA Together will – <i>'Keep a full record of the complaints and the outcome, to include, the details of the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the complainant and all other involved parties, and any relevant supporting documentation.'</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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 9 states – <i>'The role of the person dealing with a complaint – the Complaint Handler – is to attempt to find appropriate remedies to resolve complaints so that there shouldn't be a need for further escalation of the complaint'</i>
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Page 3 of Policy states – <i>'We are committed to ensuring that our staff are treated with respect. To protect our staff, we will not engage with any threatening or abusive behaviour, or vexatious complaints. We will deal with any unacceptable behaviour or vexatious complaints under the relevant policies.'</i>



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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Page 3 of Policy states – ‘We are committed to ensuring that our staff are treated with respect. To protect our staff, we will not engage with any threatening or abusive behaviour, or vexatious complaints. We will deal with any unacceptable behaviour or vexatious complaints under the relevant policies.’
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## 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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Page 3 of Policy states – ‘we aim to resolve a complaint as quickly as possible’ and all Stage 1 complaints will be acknowledged within 5 days and a responded to within 10 working days unless there are expectational circumstances
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <b><u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u></b>	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Page 6 of Policy states – ‘On receipt of the complaint, within 5 working days, an acknowledgment letter will be sent to the complainant, detailing who the complaint has been assigned to for investigation, and the date they

				<i>should expect a further written response relating to the complaint.'</i>
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <b><u>within 10 working days</u></b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Page 6 of Policy states – <i>'Complainants will receive a written response within 10 working days, from the complaint being acknowledged by YMCA Together.'</i>
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Page 7 of Policy states – <i>'If there are good reasons for a complaint to be extended to allow further investigation if a complaint is particularly complex, then the timeframes for responding to the complaints may be extended, but the complainant must be informed of the reasons why the complaint response has been extended and this extension will not be more than a further 10 working days.'</i>
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Page 7 of Policy states – <i>'If a complaint is extended, then the complainant must be provided with contact details for the Housing Ombudsman'</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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Page 6 of Policy states – <i>'Complainants will receive a written response within 10 working days, from the complaint being acknowledged by YMCA Together. The written response should address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions made,</i>

				<p><i>referencing relevant policies, law and good practice where appropriate.</i></p> <p><i>The written response will detail any follow up actions that are required to resolve the complaint and a timescale given for when these are expected to be completed. The complainant should be updated once resolutions actions have been completed.'</i></p>
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	<p>Page 6 of Policy states – <i>'The written response should address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions made, referencing relevant policies, law and good practice where appropriate'</i></p>
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	<p>Page 6 of the Policy states – <i>'If during the investigation period, the complainant raises additional related issues, that were not raised during the initial complaint, then these must be incorporated into the Stage 1 complaint investigation.'</i></p> <p>And on Page 7 of Policy: <i>'On the conclusion of the Stage 1 Complaints Process if the complainant remains unhappy the complaint should be escalated for a Stage 2 response. However, if</i></p>

				<i>the complainant raises additional issues which do not relate to the issues investigated at Stage 1 then this would be logged as a new Stage 1 complaint.'</i>
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Page 7 of Policy includes guidance for complaint handlers to include in their written response all information contained in points a – g Appendix D – is a template Stage 1 Complaints Response letter

## 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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 7 states – ' <i>On the conclusion of the Stage 1 Complaints Process if the complainant remains unhappy the complaint should be escalated for a Stage 2 response</i> '
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy &	Policy on Page 7 states – ' <i>On receiving confirmation that a</i>

	stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.		Procedure	<i>request for a Stage 2 complaint has been received the Stage 2 complaint handler must acknowledge, define, and log the Stage 2 complaint within 5 working days.'</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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 7 states – <i>'Complainants are not required to explain their reasons for requesting a Stage 2 complaint, the onus is on YMCA Together to make reasonable efforts to understand why a complainant remains unhappy after the Stage 1 response.'</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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 7 states – <i>'The Stage 2 response will be carried out by a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or a member of the Board with support from a Tenant Representative as required.'</i>
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <b><u>within 20 working days</u></b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 8 states – <i>'the customer will receive a final written response within 20 working days of the date of the Stage 2 escalation.'</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	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 8 states – <i>'If there are good reasons for a complaint to be extended to allow further investigation if a complaint is particularly complex, then the timeframes for responding to the complaints may be extended, but</i>

	reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.			<i>the complainant must be informed of the reasons why the complaint response has been extended and this extension will not be more than a further 20 working days'</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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 8 states – <i>'If a complaint is extended, then the complainant must be provided with contact details for the Housing Ombudsman'</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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 8 states – <i>'The written response will detail any follow up actions that are required to resolve the complaint and a timescale given for when these are expected to be completed. The complainant should be updated once resolutions actions have been completed.'</i>
6.18	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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 8 states – <i>'The written response should address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions made, referencing relevant policies, law and good practice where appropriate.'</i>
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the complaint stage;</li> <li>b. the complaint definition;</li> <li>c. the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>d. the reasons for any decisions</li> </ul>	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Page 8 of Policy includes guidance for complaint handlers to include in their written response all information contained in points a – g Appendix E – is a template Stage 2 Complaints Response letter

	<p>made;</p> <p>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</p> <p>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</p> <p>g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.</p>			
6.20	<p>Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.</p>	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	<p>Policy on Page 7 states – <i>'The Stage 2 response will be carried out by a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or a member of the Board with support from a Tenant Representative as required.'</i></p> <p>Stage 2 is the final complaint stage at YMCA Together.</p>

## Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	<p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apologising;</li> <li>• Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;</li> <li>• Providing an explanation,</li> </ul>	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	<p>Policy on Page 5 states in the section 'Resolving Complaints' that YMCA Together will acknowledge when something has gone wrong and set out actions taken, or to be taken, to put things right.</p>

	<p>assistance or reasons;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking action if there has been delay;</li> <li>• Reconsidering or changing a decision;</li> <li>• Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;</li> <li>• Providing a financial remedy;</li> <li>• Changing policies, procedures or practices.</li> </ul>			
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 5 states – ‘Any resolutions that we offer will consider and reflect the impact on the complainant’
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 5 states – ‘ <i>when offering resolutions we will clearly communicate this with the complainant, setting out what will happen and by when and in agreement with the complainant where appropriate. We will follow through any resolution actions to completion.</i> ’
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 5 states – ‘ <i>take guidance issued by the Housing Ombudsman when decided on appropriate resolutions for housing related complaints.</i> ’



## Section 8: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.</li> <li>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;</li> <li>c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;</li> <li>d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;</li> <li>e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and</li> <li>f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.</li> </ul>	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	<p>Policy on Page 10 states – ‘On an annual basis the Complaints Officer will be responsible for producing the ‘Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report’ for scrutiny and challenge which will include: An annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code to ensure that this policy remains in line with its requirements. (The self-assessment may be reviewed earlier if there is a significant restructure, merger or change to YMCA Together or a request to do so from the Housing Ombudsman following an investigation.)</p> <p>A qualitative and quantitative analysis of YMCA Together's complaint handling performance, <i>including a summary of complaints that YMCA Together has refused to accept</i> <i>Any findings of non-compliance with the Housing Ombudsman</i></p>

				<p><i>Complaint Handling Code</i></p> <p><i>Service improvements that have been made as a result of the learning from complaints</i></p> <p><i>Any feedback from the Housing Ombudsman about YMCA Together's performance</i></p> <p><i>Any reports or publications produced by the Housing Ombudsman in relation to the work of YMCA Together'</i></p>
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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 10 states – <i>'The 'Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report' will be reported to the Board of Trustees, who will produce a response and this along with the report will be published on the YMCA Together website.'</i>
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 10 states – <i>'On an annual basis the Complaints Officer will be responsible for producing the 'Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report' for scrutiny and challenge which will include: An annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code to ensure that this policy remains in line with its requirements. (The self-assessment may be reviewed</i>

				<i>earlier if there is a significant restructure, merger or change to YMCA Together or a request to do so from the Housing Ombudsman following an investigation.)'</i>
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 10 states – ‘On an annual basis the Complaints Officer will be responsible for producing the ‘Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report’ for scrutiny and challenge which will include: An annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code to ensure that this policy remains in line with its requirements. (The self-assessment may be reviewed earlier if there is a significant restructure, merger or change to YMCA Together or a request to do so from the Housing Ombudsman following an investigation.)’
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	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 11 states – ‘If YMCA Together is unable to comply with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, the

	compliance with the Code.			<i>Complaint Officer is responsible for informing the Housing Ombudsman, providing information to residents who may be affected and publishing on our website a timescale for returning to compliance with the code.'</i>
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## 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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	<i>Policy on Page 9 states – ‘The Complaint Officer will look beyond individual complaints and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.’</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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	<i>Policy on Page 9 states – ‘YMCA Together uses complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery’</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	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	<i>Policy on Page 10 states – ‘We will use complaints as a tool to continuously improve our services. We will discuss trends and improvement opportunities with Service Managers, Senior</i>

	committees.			<i>Leadership Team, the Service User Panel and the Board of Trustees.'</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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	The Complaints Officer is the Deputy Chief Executive at YMCA Together and the Policy on Page 10 states – <i>'The Complaints Officer will assess any themes or trends in complaints to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks or policies and procedures that may require revision.'</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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 11 states – <i>'YMCA Together has an appointment member from the Board of Trustees who has lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture at the organisation.'</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	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	Policy on Page 11 states – <i>'The MRC is responsible for ensuring that the Board of Trustees receives regular information on complaints that provides insight into complaint handling performance at YMCA Together. The Complaints Officer will provide the MRC will suitable information and staff to perform in the role of MRC and to be able to report on their findings at</i>

				<i>Board Meetings'</i>
9.7	<p>As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;</li> <li>b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;</li> <li>c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and</li> <li>d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.</li> </ul>	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	<p>Policy on Page 11 states – <i>'The information that the MRC will receive to review will include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance</li> <li>-Regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling</li> <li>-Regular updates on the outcomes of any Housing Ombudsman investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and</li> <li>-Annual complaints performance and service improvement report'</li> </ul>
9.8	<p>Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</li> <li>b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and</li> <li>c. act within the professional</li> </ul>	Yes	YMCA Together Complaints Policy & Procedure	<p>Policy on Page 11 states – <i>'The Complaints Officer and the MRC are responsible for ensuring a healthy complaint handling culture at YMCA Together. As part of this culture YMCA Together is committed to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Taking a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</li> <li>-Taking collective responsibility</li> </ul>

	standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.		<i>for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and -Acting within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.'</i>
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