Self-Assessment Form – Lincolnshire Rural Housing Association Ltd (LRHA)

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

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

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

Section 1 - Definition of a complaint

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf,	Yes	The wording is contained in the Complaints Policy
4.0	affecting an individual resident or group of residents.	N _a a	This is contained in the Ocean laiste Dalies
1.3	The resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must still be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.	Yes	This is contained in the Complaints Policy. All staff have received training in this area.
1.6	if further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter, or if the resident requests it, the issue must be logged as a complaint.	Yes	Stated in the Complaints Policy.
1.7	A landlord must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so.	Yes	Yes, all staff are trained to accept a complaint, a process document is in place to guide staff members.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.8	A complaints policy must clearly set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered, and these circumstances should be fair and reasonable to residents.	Yes	The reasons are set out in the Complaints Policy
1.9	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.	Yes	Where a complaint is not accepted, a detailed explanation is provided to the resident, and they are advised of the right to take this decision to the Housing Ombudsman. The Complaints Policy sets out the circumstances when a complaint will not be accepted.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.4	Landlords should recognise the difference between a service request , where a resident may be unhappy with a situation that they wish to have rectified, and a complaint about the service they have/have not received.	Yes	New pre-stage established for service requests.
1.5	Survey feedback may not necessarily need to be treated as a complaint, though, where possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue their dissatisfaction as a complaint if they wish to.	No	A standard wording will be developed for all future surveys.

Section 2 - Accessibility and awareness Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which residents can make a complaint such as in person, over the telephone, in writing, by email and digitally. While the Ombudsman recognises that it may not be feasible for a landlord to use all of the potential channels, there must be more than one route of access into the complaints system.	Yes	The routes for logging a complaint have been published to residents and include email, website, telephone, letter, face to face, WhatsApp and social media. We have a Resident's Handbook, Tenant Matters magazine and the website
2.3	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the number of stages involved, what will happen at each stage and the timeframes for responding.	Yes	Complaints Policy is in place and a one page Complaints Procedure Flowchart to illustrate the process.
2.4	Landlord websites, if they exist, must include information on how to raise a complaint. The complaints policy and process must be easy to find on the website.	Yes	They are present on the LRHA website - www.lrha.co.uk
2.5	Landlords must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and may need to adapt normal policies, procedures, or processes to accommodate an individual's needs. Landlords must satisfy themselves that their policy sets out how they will respond to reasonable adjustments requests in line with the Equality Act and that complaints handlers have had appropriate training to deal with such requests.	Yes	There is wording in the Complaints Policy that affirms that reasonable adjustments will be taken by LRHA.
2.6	Landlords must publicise the complaints policy and process, the Complaint Handling Code and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme in leaflets, posters, newsletters, online and as part of regular correspondence with residents.	Yes	The contact information for the Housing Ombudsman Service are on all outgoing letters.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.7	Landlords must provide residents with contact information for the Ombudsman as part of its regular correspondence with residents.	Yes	Included in all standard letters for dissatisfaction registered, the website, and the Residents Handbook which is provided to all new residents and available via the website.
2.8	Landlords must provide early advice to residents regarding their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service throughout their complaint, not only when the landlord's complaints process is exhausted.	Yes	Included in the complaints procedure flowchart, which is provided to any residents registering a complaint.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.2	Where a landlord has set up channels to communicate with its residents via social media, then it should expect to receive complaints via those channels. Policies should contain details of the steps that will be taken when a complaint is received via social media and how confidentiality and privacy will be maintained.	Yes	Each of the methods for receiving complaints are covered in the Complaint Policy.

Section 3 - Complaint handling personnel

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
3.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling to ensure complaints receive the necessary attention, and that these are reported to the governing body. This Code will refer to that person or team as the "complaints officer".	Yes	The Resident Engagement Manager is the officer responsible.
3.2	the complaint handler appointed must have appropriate complaint handling skills and no conflicts of interest.	Yes	Supported by Head of Operations and Chief Executive.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
3.3	 Complaint handlers should: be able to act sensitively and fairly be trained to handle complaints and deal with distressed and upset residents have access to staff at all levels to facilitate quick resolution of complaints have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes quickly and fairly. 	Yes	Additional training for new, and less experienced staff involved in customer service and complaints is completed.

Section 4 - Complaint handling principles Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.1	Any decision to try and resolve a concern must be taken in agreement with the resident and a landlord's audit trail/records should be able to demonstrate this. Landlords must ensure that efforts to resolve a resident's concerns do not obstruct access to the complaints procedure or result in any unreasonable delay. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'pre-complaint stage') as this causes unnecessary confusion for residents. When a complaint is made, it must be acknowledged and logged at stage one of the complaints procedure within five days of receipt.	Yes	Complaint handling tracked and reported to Leadership Team, the Operations Committee and Board of Management. Weekly formal meetings with the Resident Engagement Manager, Property Maintenance Manager, Head of Operations and Chief Executive with minutes taken.
4.2	Within the complaint acknowledgement, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	Yes	Example letters from complaints are available.
4.6	A complaint investigation must be conducted in an impartial manner.	Yes	The investigations are completed by the Head of Operations, Resident Engagement Manager, Property Maintenance Manager and Chief Executive.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.7	 The complaint handler must: deal with complaints on their merits act independently and have an open mind take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest consider all information and evidence carefully keep the complaint confidential as far as possible, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter. 	Yes	Additional training for new and less experienced staff on complaint handling and investigations is completed. The selection of the complaint handler is made by the Chief Executive to ensure suitability.
4.11	Landlords must adhere to any reasonable arrangements agreed with residents in terms of frequency and method of communication	Yes	All residents given choice of how they would like to be interacted with, the choices are saved on the Capita OpenHousing system. Each telephone contact details are checked and choice confirmed.
4.12	 The resident, and if applicable any staff member who is the subject of the complaint, must also be given a fair chance to: set out their position comment on any adverse findings before a final decision is made. 	Yes	There are procedures detailed when any member of staff is the subject of a complaint and support is in place.
4.13	A landlord must include in its complaints policy its timescales for a resident to request escalation of a complaint	Yes	They are contained in the Complaint Policy.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.14	A landlord must not unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure and must have clear and valid reasons for taking that course of action. Reasons for declining to escalate a complaint must be clearly set out in a landlord's complaints policy and must be the same as the reasons for not accepting a complaint.	Yes	This is included in the Complaint Policy.
4.15	A full record must be kept of the complaint, any review and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties and any reports or surveys prepared.	Yes	The Resident Engagement Manager is responsible for compiling all documents relating to a complaint and managing the process of the complaint, monitoring target deadlines to ensure key dates are met.
4.18	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives when pursuing a complaint.	Yes	There is an Unacceptable Behaviour Policy in place.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.3	Landlords should manage residents' expectations from the outset, being clear where a desired outcome is unreasonable or unrealistic	Yes	The staff are trained to ask what outcome would the resident like to see.
4.4	A complaint should be resolved at the earliest possible opportunity, having assessed what evidence is needed to fully consider the issues, what outcome would resolve the matter for the resident and whether there are any urgent actions required.	Yes	Pre-stage added to filter out service requests. Aim to resolve in first period of 10 working days.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.5	Landlords should give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord where this is reasonable.	Yes	Yes, representatives are recognised and will be co-operated with during the complaints process.
4.8	Where a key issue of a complaint relates to the parties' legal obligations landlords should clearly set out their understanding of the obligations of both parties.	Yes	All positions clearly stated, documents made available to residents and leaseholders if they do have them.
4.9	Communication with the resident should not generally identify individual members of staff or contractors.	Yes	Roles used where possible.
4.10	Landlords should keep residents regularly updated about the progress of the investigation.	Yes	Specific diary with reminders set up and managed by the Resident Engagement Manager.
4.16	Landlords should seek feedback from residents in relation to the landlord's complaint handling as part of the drive to encourage a positive complaint and learning culture.	Yes	Each person registering a complaint is asked a series of questions after closure. Satisfaction is asked before complaint is closed.
4.17	Landlords should recognise the impact that being complained about can have on future service delivery. Landlords should ensure that staff are supported and engaged in the complaints process, including the learning that can be gained.	Yes	Staff are supported internally with wellbeing contact, mental health first aider and regular meetings.
4.19	Any restrictions placed on a resident's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be appropriate to their needs and should demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	Included in the Complaint Policy and the Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.

Section 5 - Complaint stages

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.1	Landlords must respond to the complaint <u>within 10 working</u> <u>days</u> of the complaint being logged. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	The targets are provided to the manager investigating the complaint.
5.5	A complaint response must be sent to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue, are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned expeditiously with regular updates provided to the resident.	Yes	All records are retained and tracking document for complaints breaks each complaint into component issue to track progress with each one.
5.6	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	This is completed and examples are available.
5.8	 Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage one in clear, plain language: the complaint stage the decision on the complaint the reasons for any decisions made the details of any remedy offered to put things right details of any outstanding actions details of how to escalate the matter to stage two if the resident is not satisfied with the answer 	Yes	Examples available.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.9	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage one it must be progressed to stage two of the landlord's procedure, unless an exclusion ground now applies. In instances where a landlord declines to escalate a complaint it must clearly communicate in writing its reasons for not escalating as well as the resident's right to approach the Ombudsman about its decision.	Yes	This detailed in the Complaint Policy and complaints process flowchart.
5.10	On receipt of the escalation request, landlords must set out their understanding of issues outstanding and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	Yes	This detailed in the Complaint Policy.
5.11	Landlords must only escalate a complaint to stage two once it has completed stage one and at the request of the resident.	Yes	It is discussed with the resident complaining and if they are not satisfied it is taken to stage two.
5.12	The person considering the complaint at stage two, must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage one.	Yes	Stage 2 is Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive.
5.13	Landlords must respond to the stage two complaint <u>within 20</u> working days of the complaint being escalated. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	The target dates are diarised and managed by the Resident Engagement Manager who will remind the Manager completing the investigation on the upcoming date.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.16	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage two in clear, plain language:	Yes	The stage two investigation is completed by the Chief Executive. Examples, of previous letters are available.
	the complaint stage		
	the complaint definition		
	the decision on the complaint		
	the reasons for any decisions made		
	the details of any remedy offered to put things right		
	details of any outstanding actions		
	and		
	• if the landlord has a third stage, details of how to escalate the matter to stage three		
	• if this was the final stage, details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied.		

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.17	Two stage landlord complaint procedures are ideal. This ensures that the complaint process is not unduly long. If landlords strongly believe a third stage is necessary, they must set out their reasons for this as part of their self-assessment. A process with more than three stages is not acceptable under any circumstances.	N/A	

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.20	 Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage three in clear, plain language: the complaint stage the complaint definition the decision on the complaint the reasons for any decisions made the details of any remedy offered to put things right details of any outstanding actions details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied 	N/A	

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.2	If an extension beyond 20 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.	Yes	This is included in the complaints process flowchart and Complaints Policy.
5.3	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response.	Yes	The details are provided at every stage of the complaints process.
5.4	Where the problem is a recurring issue, the landlord should consider any older reports as part of the background to the complaint if this will help to resolve the issue for the resident.	Yes	This is part of investigation and consideration of the complaint.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.7	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these should be incorporated into the stage one response if they are relevant and the stage one response has not been issued. Where the stage one response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the complaint should be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	Each complaint is broken down into any individual issues and detailed at each stage. Any additional complaints are dealt during the process to ensure that the resident feels all issues have been fully discussed and dealt with, and to control staff time on investigation and management of the complaint.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.14	If an extension beyond 10 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.	Yes	Any extension is discussed with the complainant and then confirmed in writing. An update is provided on the stage of the investigation to explain why the extension is necessary.
5.15	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response/	Yes	These are provided at every stage of the complaints process.

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

Section 6 - Putting things right

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
6.1	Effective dispute resolution requires a process designed to resolve complaints. Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right.	Yes	This is included in the Complaints Policy.
6.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the extent of any service failures and the level of detriment caused to the resident as a result. A landlord must carefully manage the expectations of residents and not promise anything that cannot be delivered or would cause unfairness to other residents.	Yes	A Remedy and Compensation Policy is in place with guidance on levels and type of compensation.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
6.5	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	This is included in the Remedy and Compensation Policy.
6.6	In awarding compensation, a landlord must consider whether any statutory payments are due, if any quantifiable losses have been incurred, the time and trouble a resident has been put to as well as any distress and inconvenience caused.	Yes	The Chief Executive is responsible for any decision on the level and type of remedy.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
6.3	Landlords should look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether anything needs to be 'put right' in terms of process or systems to the benefit of all residents.	Yes	Analysis undertaken on each complaint and as a whole to identify trends and themes.
6.7	In some cases, a resident may have a legal entitlement to redress. The landlord should still offer a resolution where possible, obtaining legal advice as to how any offer of resolution should be worded.	Yes	There is a Remedy and Compensation Policy in place.

Section 7 - Continuous learning and improvement

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.2	Accountability and transparency are integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints in their annual report and more frequently to their residents, staff and scrutiny panels.	Yes	Meetings with Resident Representatives Network to review complaints, consideration of previous complaints and identification of service improvements.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.3	A member of the governing body should be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This role will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight to the governing body on the landlord's complaint handling performance.	Yes	A Board Member experienced in this area has been appointed the Complaints Champion on the Board of Management.
7.4	 As a minimum, governing bodies should receive: Regular updates on the volume, categories and outcome of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance including compliance with the Ombudsman's orders Regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling, The annual performance report produced by the Ombudsman, where applicable Individual complaint outcomes where necessary, including where the Ombudsman made findings of severe maladministration or referrals to regulatory bodies. The implementation of management responses should be tracked to ensure they are delivered to agreed timescales. The annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code for scrutiny and challenge. 	Yes	Each Operational Committee, Board meeting receives a report on complaints. Weekly meeting reporting to the Chief Executive
7.5	Any themes or trends should be assessed by senior management to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks or policies and procedures that require revision. They should also be used to inform staff and contractor training.	Yes	Consideration of all complaints is undertaken to identify possible service improvement actions. Review outcome discussed at weekly complaints meeting and the Leadership Team meeting.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.6	 Landlords should have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all employees that reflects the need to: have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints rather than blaming others act within the Professional Standards for engaging with complaints as set by the Chartered Institute of Housing. 	Yes	There is a collective approach and agreed standard of behaviour with regards to complaints. The culture has been built by staff training, conducting weekly meetings to take responsibility and resolve the complaints. We are held accountable by the reporting to key stakeholders. The Operations Team reflect on complaints to understand and prevent reoccurrence, to change policies and procedures to improve the outcomes. Reporting to Leadership Team, Residents, Operations Committee and Board of Management.

Section 8 - Self-assessment and compliance

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
8.1	Landlords must carry out an annual self-assessment against the Code to ensure their complaint handling remains in line with its requirements.	Yes	This is completed and reported to the Board of Management.
8.2	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure and/or change in procedures.	Yes	

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
8.3	 Following each self-assessment, a landlord must: report the outcome of their self-assessment to their governing body. In the case of local authorities, self-assessment outcomes should be reported to elected members. publish the outcome of their assessment on their website if they have one, or otherwise make accessible to residents include the self-assessment in their annual report section on complaints handling performance. 	Yes	The outcome will be uploaded to the website. The results will be reported to the Board of Management and Operations Committee.