

Birchgrove Complaints Procedure Self-assessment form 2024



Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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 landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'	Yes	Please reference section 1 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
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	N/A	
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	Please reference section 1 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	



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	Please reference Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
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	Please reference section 11 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	

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	Please reference section 1 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	To date no complaints have been rejected, therefore no evidence can be provided



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. 	Yes	Please reference section 1 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	Yes	It is not feasible to provide evidence in this regard. The 12-month time frame is specified in our Complaints Procedure	As this specific scenario has not yet arisen, we are unable to provide evidence. However, Birchgrove has adopted this approach and will implement it as outlined should such a situation occur in the future.
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and	Yes	It is not feasible to provide evidence in this regard	As this specific scenario has not yet arisen, we are unable to provide evidence.



	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.			
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	N/A	To date, no complaints have been excluded. Birchgrove's approach ensures that each complaint is received, thoroughly reviewed, and responded to with due consideration of its specific merits and circumstances.

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	Birchgrove adopts an approach in which services can be offered and provided in various formats, such as large-print documents, personalized guidance, and tailored solutions that accommodate the specific needs or requirements of our senior residents.	
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints	Yes	This requirement aligns with the	At Birchgrove, we take great pride



	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.		cultural behaviours we uphold and consistently adhere to. However, it is inherently challenging to provide concrete evidence of this in the form of formal documentation.	in the support and care we extend to our residents and visitors alike. Central to this commitment is our strong customer service culture and our dedicated approach to complaints handling, including the improvement of our processes as a result of reviewing any complaints and feedback.
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well- publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.	Yes	Please reference section 7 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
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	Feedback (birchgrove.life)	Please find the link to Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure at the bottom of the page
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	Please reference section 7 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
3.6	Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be	Yes	Please reference section 2 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	



	represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.			
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	Please reference section 5 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	

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	Please reference section 9 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
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	Yes	Please reference section 9 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	



authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.			
4.3 Landlords are expected to prioritise comp handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be sui- trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints seen as a core service and must be resou handle complaints effectively	tably Yes are	N/A	At Birchgrove, we take great pride in the support and care we extend to our residents. Central to this commitment is our strong customer service culture and our dedicated approach to complaints handling.

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	N/A	Birchgrove maintains a single, straightforward complaints policy in adherence to this code. All complainants receive the same level of respect and attention, with no differential treatment afforded during or after the conclusion of the complaints process.



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	Please reference Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
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	Please reference Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.	Yes	Birchgrove takes pride in managing all complaints internally, relying on the expertise of its knowledgeable staff.	
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	Birchgrove takes pride in managing all complaints internally, relying on the expertise of its knowledgeable staff.	
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	Yes	Please reference section 4 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	



	must be asked for clarification.			
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	It is not feasible to provide evidence in this regard since this situation has not been encountered yet	
5.8	 At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully. 	Yes	N/A	This requirement aligns with our customary way of handling complaints. However, it is inherently challenging to provide concrete evidence of this in the form of formal documentation.
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	It is not feasible to provide evidence in this regard since this situation has not been encountered yet	
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	Yes	It is not feasible to provide evidence in this regard since this situation has not been encountered yet	



	must be kept under active review.			
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	It is not feasible to provide evidence in this regard since this situation has not been encountered yet	
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	Any records that Birchgrove holds are currently protected under the Data Protection Act so unless a complaint it escalated to the Ombudsman and as such we're required to disclose such information, at this point in time no information can be provided as proof.	
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	Please reference section 4 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
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	Please reference section 6 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	



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	Please reference section 6 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
------	---	-----	--	--

Section 6: Complaints Stages

<u>Stage 1</u>

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	Please reference section 9 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	To ensure promptly acknowledgement and resolution of complaints, our Complaints Procedure allows for the local General Manager
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the complaint being received.	Yes	Please reference section 3 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	At Birchgrove, a more ambitious approach has been adopted, with a 24-hour written acknowledgment process in place
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the	Yes	Please reference section 4 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	At Birchgrove, a more ambitious approach has been adopted, with



	complaint being acknowledged.			a 7-day response process now in place
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	Please reference section 4 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
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	Please reference section 5 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
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	N/A	Whilst we are unable to provide evidence at this time, this is the approach Birchgrove will implement whenever such a scenario arises.
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	N/A	Whilst we are unable to provide evidence at this time, this is the approach Birchgrove will implement whenever such a scenario arises.
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints	Yes	N/A	Whilst we are unable to provide



	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.			evidence at this time, this is the approach Birchgrove will implement whenever such a scenario arises.
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	Please reference section 4 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	

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	Yes	Please reference section 4 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	Although this situation has not been encountered yet, it's clearly



	progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.			stipulated in our complaints procedure
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	Please reference section 4 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
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	Please reference section 4 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Please reference section 4 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Please reference section 4 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	At Birchgrove, a more ambitious approach has been adopted, with a 14-day response process now in place
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Please reference section 4 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be	Yes	Please reference section 5 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	



	provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.			
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	Please reference section 4 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
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	It is not feasible to provide evidence in this regard since this situation has not been encountered yet	Whilst we are unable to provide evidence at this time, this is the approach Birchgrove will implement whenever such a scenario arises.
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.	Yes	Please reference section 4 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	



6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	Please reference section 4 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
------	---	-----	--	--

Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	 Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. 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. 	Yes	It is not feasible to provide evidence in this regard since this situation has not been encountered yet	Whilst we are unable to provide evidence at this time, this is the approach Birchgrove will implement whenever such a scenario arises.



7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	N/A	It is not feasible to provide evidence in this regard since this situation has not been encountered yet
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	N/A	It is not feasible to provide evidence in this regard since this situation has not been encountered yet
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	N/A	It is not feasible to provide evidence in this regard since this situation has not been encountered yet



Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include: a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept; c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman; d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.	Yes	N/A	To date, our dedication to exceptional customer care has resulted in no formal complaints being received, and thus no reports have been required. If a complaint arises in 2025 or beyond, we are ready to provide detailed reports to the Board, ensuring thorough oversight and informed decision-making.



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	N/A	To date, our dedication to exceptional customer care has resulted in no formal complaints being received, and thus no reports have been required. If a complaint arises in 2025 or beyond, we are ready to provide detailed reports to the Board, ensuring thorough oversight and informed decision-making.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	N/A	It is not feasible to provide evidence in this regard since this situation has not been encountered yet
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	N/A	It is not feasible to provide evidence in this regard since this situation has not been encountered yet
8.5	If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.	Yes	Please reference section 10 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	



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	This requirement aligns with the cultural behaviours we uphold and consistently adhere to. However, it is inherently challenging to provide concrete evidence of this in the form of formal documentation.	At Birchgrove, we take great pride in the support and care we extend to our residents. Central to this commitment is our strong customer service culture and our dedicated approach to complaints handling, including the improvement of our processes as a result of reviewing any complaints and feedback.
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	This requirement aligns with the cultural behaviours we uphold and consistently adhere to. However, it is inherently challenging to provide concrete evidence of this in the form of formal documentation.	At Birchgrove, we take great pride in the support and care we extend to our residents and visitors alike. Central to this commitment is our strong customer service culture and our dedicated approach to complaints handling, including the improvement of our processes as a result of reviewing any complaints and feedback.
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning	Yes	N/A	Although Birchgrove does not have committees of residents or panels, a constant communication



	and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.			channel is maintained via events, 1-2-1s, notice boards and weekly communication through our resident's management software.
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	Please reference section 7 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
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	Please reference section 7 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	
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	Please reference section 7 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	To date, our commitment to exemplary customer care has ensured that no feedback or representation has been received that meets the definition of a formal complaint. This positive position is reflected in the reporting provided to the Board. Should circumstances change or a complaint arise, we are fully prepared to enhance our reporting to the Board, providing



9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.	Yes	Please reference section 7 in Birchgrove's Complaints Procedure	detailed analysis and insights as required to maintain accountability and transparency. To date, our commitment to exemplary customer care has ensured that no feedback or representation has been received that meets the definition of a formal complaint. This positive position is reflected in the reporting provided to the Board. Should circumstances change or a complaint arise, we are fully prepared to enhance our reporting to the Board, providing detailed analysis and insights as required to maintain
9.8	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to: a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and	Yes	This requirement aligns with the cultural behaviours we uphold and consistently adhere to. However, it is inherently challenging to provide concrete evidence of this in the form of formal documentation.	accountability and transparency. At Birchgrove, we take great pride in the support and care we extend to our residents and visitors alike. Central to this commitment is our strong customer service culture and our dedicated approach to complaints handling, including the improvement of our processes as a result of reviewing any complaints and feedback.



c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any	
relevant professional body.	