

Complaint Handling Self-Assessment 2025 to 2026

Appendix A: Self-assessment form

Complaint Handling Self-Assessment 2025 to 2026

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

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

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

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

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or 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	Making a complaint about housing services Westmorland and Furness Council And Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 2	Covered in Evidence column
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	Making a complaint about housing services Westmorland and Furness Council And Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Pages 1, 3 and 12 Crib sheets	Training delivered to operational staff emphasises this.
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	Yes	Making a complaint about housing services Westmorland and Furness Council	Service requests are logged on the housing management system and reported periodically as part of wider performance

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.		And Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Pages 2-3	reporting in areas including repairs and estate management.
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	Making a complaint about housing services Westmorland and Furness Council And Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 13 Crib sheets and Learning Hub	Staff are aware of this as part of training. Managers responding to complaints will ensure that the request is still being dealt with or has already been dealt with in reviewing the complaint.
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	Publications to tenants contain information on how to make a complaint as a standing item. Example Page 33-34 of Housing Matters Newsletter - Summer 2026 (Accessible version)	Tenants are regular communicated with around how they can give feedback and make a complaint through standard publications (such as the newsletter, produced twice yearly) to social media posts and leaflets.

Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or 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	Making a complaint about housing services Westmorland and Furness Council And Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Pages 4-6	There have been no complaint refusals in 2025/26. A robust corporate complaint management process ensures that complaints are logged and allocated objectively and based on the individual merits of the complaint. The Complaints Team have governance arrangements to validate complaint responses to ensure they meet minimum requirements.
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	Yes	Making a complaint about housing services Westmorland and Furness Council And Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Pages 4-6	Covered in Evidence column

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court. Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.			
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	Yes	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Pages 4-6	Covered in Evidence column
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.	Yes	Making a complaint about housing services Westmorland and Furness Council And Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Pages 4-6	There have been no complaint refusals in 2025/26. A robust corporate complaint management process ensures that complaints are logged and allocated objectively and based on the individual merits of the complaint. The Complaints Team have governance arrangements to validate complaint responses to ensure they meet minimum requirements.

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Pages 4-6	A robust corporate complaint management process ensures that complaints are logged and allocated objectively and based on the individual merits of the complaint. The Landlord Service Managers would have to provide evidence around exclusion reasoning in returning the response.

Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or 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	Making a complaint about housing services Westmorland and Furness Council And Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Pages 11 and 12	The Landlords housing management system holds tenant insight data around communication preferences and needs. This is considered when engaging with tenants.

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Pages 11 and 12	As well as a dedicated complaints team who have full training on complaint handling, the Landlord Service also provide training and briefings to staff around the process and how complaints can be logged and passed to the corporate team.
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	Covered in commentary/ explanation column	Complaint performance is reported quarterly to involved tenants and to Senior Leadership and Members. Complaint numbers remain stable but in providing data and narratives, complaint performance is reported based on timeliness and reasons (to identify trends and suggest actions) rather than being focussed on the number of complaints.
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.	Yes	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026	Recently reviewed and recommendations implemented following Compliance Review (April-August 2026)

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.			
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Pages 12 and 15	Annual report to tenants summarises complaints performance and provides information on the Ombudsman and the Code with links to the self-assessment and Report
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	Making a complaint about housing services Westmorland and Furness Council And Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Pages 3 and 12	We would always encourage this and actively promote this for vulnerable tenants, particularly those with communication needs. This is common practice for the service across all areas of tenancy management with third party authorisations in place in many cases.
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	Making a complaint about housing services Westmorland and Furness Council And	Closing statements for all Stage 2 complaints also feature details of the resident's right to access the Ombudsman service and details of how to do this.

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
			Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 15-16	

Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or 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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Pages 11, 19-20	The council has a dedicated corporate complaint handling team who take overall responsibility for complaint handling. Internal governance arrangements prescribe a lead officer (and deputy) for each service area, including the Landlord Service, for each stage of the complaints process. Reporting complaint handling forms part of the overall performance reporting framework that is reported to senior leaders and cabinet members quarterly. The Landlord Service also report this in more detail to the above

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
				groups but also to involved tenants and the MRC each quarter and to tenants twice per year.
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	Covered in commentary/ explanation column	The council has a dedicated corporate complaint handling team who take overall responsibility for complaint handling. Internal governance arrangements prescribe a lead officer (and deputy) for each service area, including the Landlord Service, for each stage of the complaints process. The team sit independently to the service and have their own management structure and escalation process for disputes.
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	Covered in commentary/ explanation column	Embedded in induction training, team meetings and part of mandatory staff training modules. Dedicated complaints team to manage complaints process and designated officers within the Landlord Service to handle complaints. Culture created in reviewing performance around

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
				what is the data telling us, key trends and themes and the steps/actions the service are taking to address this.

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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026	Covered in Evidence column
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026	There are only 2 stages to the complaints process and this is clearly publicised.
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026	There are only 2 stages to the complaints process and this is clearly publicised.

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 4	The service handle the complaint and liaise with any third parties as part of the investigation and will respond to the complaint using the information gathered as part of the investigation.
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 4	The service handle the complaint and liaise with any third parties as part of the investigation and will respond to the complaint using the information gathered as part of the investigation.
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 13 and 14	The complaints team in allocating the complaint set out the complaint and the outcomes the tenant is seeking as part of the allocation. Staff responding to complaints are trained in handling and responding to the complaint in this way. For Stage 2 complaints, there is an additional step for responding officers before submitting the response to answer mandatory questions back to the complaints

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
				team, which includes these two specific areas.
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 13 and 14	Officers are trained in handling complaints this way and set out clearly responsibilities. Where possible the responding officer will link in with the relevant council service (if other aspects relate to other council functions/services) to provide or facilitate a response.
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Response Templates require the evidence considered to be referenced. Quality assurance arrangements check responses.	Complaint handlers investigate complaints fairly and independently, considering each case on its merits. Residents are given the opportunity to explain their concerns and provide evidence. Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest are managed through the allocation process, and all relevant information and evidence is reviewed before a response is issued. The independence of the complaint handling team from the service promotes this approach.

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 13 and 14	There was only one complaint not responded to within the timeframes in 2025/26 and the tenant was updated with regards progress of this complaint and an explanation provided. The complaints team monitor response timeframes, send reminders to officers allocated complaints and will liaise with the resident where necessary.
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 13 and 14 Recent complaint response have evidenced this. Written only communication was requested throughout the process including the enquiries and clarification process. This was maintained and an easy read version provided alongside the main response in recognition of equality information.	The complaints team record any requests for reasonable adjustments and this is passed on through the allocation process. Complaint responses recognise equality act considerations where this is an integral part of the complaint and adapt procedures and contact methods in line with adjustments requested. Further information is held on housing management system around reasonable adjustments and disabilities which is also considered when responding to and managing complaints.

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
			EDI Training mandatory for all staff	
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 10-12	No refusals in 2025/26 and staff training includes information on grounds for refusal and the need to evidence these clearly. This would also need to be checked with a Manager prior to refusal submission. The complaints team quality check refusals as these are reported separately.
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	The Complaint Team hold the complaint (including staging and other key details), correspondence and supporting documentation on file centrally.	This is also provided to the Senior Manager for the Landlord Service quarterly with the data as part of performance reporting frameworks.
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	Yes	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 18-19	Staff are encouraged to consider and implement remedies throughout the handling of the complaint.

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.			
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 8-10 Case example available	There is a separate unreasonable customer procedure when the policy is invoked. This also includes a warning process prior to invoking the unreasonable customer policy.
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 8-10	The Policy provides further definitions around this.

Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or 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.	Yes	Covered in commentary/ explanation column	Officers managing complaints are trained to view the complaint at the earliest opportunity to consider where enquiries and investigations

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	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.			may need to start to avoid delays to responses. This also allows officers to understand where a response may be able to be provided relatively quickly. The corporate system provides reminders to allocated officers if they have not viewed a complaint within the first 5 days.
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u>	Yes	Making a complaint about housing services Westmorland and Furness Council And Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 13	Corporate Complaints team have robust processes and systems in place to ensure timeframes are adhered to.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Making a complaint about housing services Westmorland and Furness Council And	Corporate Complaints team have robust processes and systems in place to ensure timeframes are adhered to.

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
			Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 13	
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 13	No planned extensions were arranged in 2025/26 but staff are trained in the expectations around extensions and that all reasonable attempts should be made to avoid these where possible.
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	Template letters/communications	Staff are aware of the need to do this.
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 13	The response is provided in line with the prescribed timeframes regardless of whether the actions are still in progress. The officer handling the complaint will allocate the actions to a housing office/surveyor and repairs issued/cases opened.

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 13 Crib sheets and templates	Staff training includes how to structure complaint responses, expectations and template responses, learning from complaint responses and escalations where these could have been avoided if more detail had been provided. Ombudsman case reviews also used for learning and to highlight importance of good evidence gathering and comprehensive responses.
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 14	This is the approach adopted in the allocation process. If the responding officer identifies this in handling the complaint, they will revert back to the complaints team to log a separate complaint and the response will make this clear to the applicant alongside the acknowledgement of the newly logged complaint.

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 13 Crib sheets and templates	Training reinforces this structure and approach to complaint handling at Stage 1. Templates provide this structure as guidance to responses and quality checks ensure this is taking place.

Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or 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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Pages 14-15	Corporate Complaints team allocate Stage 2 complaints in line with the Codes requirements.

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	Making a complaint about housing services Westmorland and Furness Council And Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 14	Corporate Complaints team have robust processes and systems in place to ensure timeframes are adhered to.
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	Making a complaint about housing services Westmorland and Furness Council And Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 14	Stage 2 complaints are logged without requesting further information by the Complaints Team. If the landlord is unable to ascertain why the resident remains unhappy, they will contact the resident to seek further information, otherwise the review will take place and response issued.
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 15	The council has a dedicated corporate complaint handling team who take overall responsibility for complaint allocation. Internal governance arrangements prescribe a lead officer (and deputy) for each service area, including the Landlord Service, for each stage of the

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
				complaints process. The team also have sight of the officer who responded to the complaint at Stage 1 to ensure this is considered in escalating the complaint.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Making a complaint about housing services Westmorland and Furness Council And Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 14	Corporate Complaints team have robust processes and systems in place to ensure timeframes are adhered to.
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 14	No planned extensions were arranged in 2025/26 but staff are trained in the expectations around extensions and that all reasonable attempts should be made to avoid these where possible.

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	Template letters/communications	Staff are aware of the need to do this.
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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Pages 14-15	The response is provided in line with the prescribed timeframes regardless of whether the actions are still in progress. The officer handling the complaint will allocate the actions to a housing office/surveyor and repairs issued/cases opened.
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	Making a complaint about housing services Westmorland and Furness Council And Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 15	Staff training includes how to structure complaint responses, expectations and template responses, learning from complaint responses and escalations where these could have been avoided if more detail had been provided. Ombudsman case reviews also used for learning and to highlight importance of good evidence gathering and comprehensive responses.

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	Making a complaint about housing services Westmorland and Furness Council And Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 15 Crib sheets and templates	Training reinforces this structure and approach to complaint handling at Stage 2. Templates provide this structure as guidance to responses and quality checks ensure this is taking place.
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Page 15	Responses are coordinated by the responding Manager

Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or 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	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026	The policy and procedures in place for complaint handling promote the landlord to fully investigate the complaint and identify any wrong doing. In doing so, and where something has gone wrong, the landlord is expected to acknowledge this and consider actions taken on being taken to put things right. Officers are trained in this approach and it is expected that apologies are issued where appropriate and even where no fault is found based on the personal impact of the situation. Complaints are managed at a management level and in responding to complaints, those managers are tasked with taking appropriate steps to address things that have gone wrong and adjusting policy/procedures as necessary. These actions would also be reported through governance arrangements each quarter.

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Pages 18 and 19	Remedies at a service level are based on a composite assessment of the complaint, situation this has left the complainant in and any financial detriment caused either directly or indirectly. Where there is no quantifiable impact, but there is fault, the feelings and impact personally is considered. Remedies are proportionate and based on direct and indirect impact.
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	Housing management system and finance records.	Where remedies are offered, these will be included in correspondence with the tenant and assigned to an officer to action and track to completion.
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Pages 18 and 19	Remedy policy and guidance and compensation guidance shared with officers handling landlord complaints.

Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or 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	Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025/26 - Provided with this submission Housing complaints handling code Westmorland and Furness Council	Report includes all the relevant sections a-e as required by the Ombudsman. This report is shared with Tenants Forum, Cabinet and Senior Leaders. Tenants Forum are encouraged to scrutinise the report ahead of planned meetings and challenge/ask relevant questions at the meeting, which are minuted and available on the council's website.

Complaint Handling Self-Assessment 2025 to 2026

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	Housing complaints handling code Westmorland and Furness Council Response accessed via above link	The Self-Assessment and Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report have been shared with Tenants Forum (involved tenants), Senior Leadership and Cabinet.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	Covered in commentary/ explanation column	There have been no significant restructures, mergers or changes since the self-assessment process became statutory in April 2024.
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	Covered in commentary/ explanation column	This would be completed as required. To date, this has not applied to WandFC.
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	Covered in commentary/explanation column	The landlord is aware of the need to notify and inform the ombudsman and those affected including residents, publishing information and timeframes.

Section 9: Scrutiny and oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or 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	Action plans annually from the self-assessment and service improvements made as a result of these. Annual Report. Quarterly Performance Reports.	Learning is continuous and embedded within processes of complaint handling. The Senior Manager for the service reviews complaints quarterly and shares performance, trends and actions/improvements with tenants, senior leaders operational management and Members. As part of our improvement plan, we will also be introducing Tenant Scrutiny with complaints as a focus area.
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	Action plans annually from the self-assessment and service improvements made as a result of these. Annual Report. Quarterly Performance Reports.	Complaint handling culture promotes that complaints should be viewed positively and be learned from. Staff are encouraged to think how things could have been done differently to avoid dissatisfaction. The approach has improved significantly in 2025/26. Complaints performance analysis includes trend analysis and lessons learned/action planning.

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	Yes	Action plans annually from the self-assessment and service improvements made as a result of these. Annual Report. Quarterly Performance Reports.	All of the evidence documents are presented to Tenants Forum, Senior Leaders and Members and the annual reports along with mid-year performance updates are also provided to all tenants. The development of Tenant Scrutiny arrangements will strengthen this further.
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	Quarterly performance reporting on complaint handling monitors numbers at each stage, timeliness of complaints and trends/themes, including action planning/improvements needed.	Senior Manager for the Landlord Service is the lead person in complaint handling. The post holder is the link with the corporate complaints team and analyses complaint handling performance, included themes, trends and risks quarterly alongside identifying any service/policy change needed as a result of this.
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	Yes	Cabinet Member for Housing is the MRC. Self-Assessment that MRC role aligns with expectations of the Code.	The MRC briefs cabinet on complaint handling as part of performance reporting including the annual self-assessment and report. The MRC also monitors complaints

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Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	as the Member Responsible for Complaints (the MRC).			quarterly to ensure a positive culture is being promoted.
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	Self-Assessment that MRC role aligns with expectations of the Code.	The MRC is provided performance analysis reports for complaints quarterly and is involved in scrutinising these at planned meetings. The MRC has direct access to the Senior Manager for the Service and also the operational staff. If risks emerge of trends are identified between scheduled reports, the Senior Manager would liaise with the MRC as required. Cabinet are provided complaint performance information quarterly and the MRC is a Cabinet Member so provides the necessary insight/escalation.
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;	Yes	Self-Assessment that MRC role aligns with expectations of the Code.	The MRC and Cabinet along with Senior Leadership Team receive quarterly updates on a-d.

Complaint Handling Self-Assessment 2025 to 2026

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes or No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	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.			
9.8	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to: a) have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; b) take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and c) act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.	Yes	Corporate Compliments and Complaints Policy 2026 Feedback	A dedicated Complaint Handling team, standardised systems and templates and defined responsibilities at a service level ensure a standard objective is in place and delivered against. All relevant employees follow this process. Training reinforces this and ongoing monitoring ensures the objective is being met. Cross working is well established and collaborative approach embedded.