

To all member landlords

28 September 2023

Dear Chief Executive,

Statutory Consultation on Complaint Handling Code

As you will know, under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act, the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code of practice will become statutory.

Our Complaint Handling Code (the Code) has been in operation since 2020. Under the Act, there will now be a legal duty on Scheme members to comply with the Code, as well as a duty on the Ombudsman to monitor compliance with it, regardless of whether or not we receive complaints.

Under Section 40 of the Act, we are consulting with stakeholders on the Code. As a member of the Scheme, I wanted to make you aware of the proposed changes and consultation period.

As part of our key objective to extend fairness, we have used this consultation to develop a joint Code with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. Our aim is to bring consistency to complaint handling for social housing residents, regardless of whether the landlord is a council, ALMO, housing association or cooperative.

Our consultation will run between 28 September and 23 November. We are keen to consider your views and you can access the consultation page via [this link](#). As you will see, we have proposed minimal changes to the existing Code, with the key requirements remaining unchanged from the one first published three years ago. This will support continuity and certainty for complaint handling in the sector and reflects the sound principles on which the Code was first developed. Please see our [FAQ factsheet](#) which provides further information.

We will begin using our powers relating to our statutory duty to monitor landlords' compliance with the Code from 1 April 2024. Rather than waiting until then, it is vital that landlords are proactive in seeking to comply with the Code ahead of time. This includes an annual self-assessment against the Code, taking that assessment through governance and publishing it. The existing Code will remain a condition of Scheme membership and obligations on landlords between now and 1 April 2024 will remain unchanged; we will continue to take action where required.

During the consultation period, we are holding a webinar for landlords on Tuesday 10 October between 11am and 12pm. Meanwhile, the next of our [monthly Code drop-in sessions](#) – on 26 October between 2:30pm and 4pm – provides a further opportunity for your organisation to ask any questions about the Code and duty to monitor.

We look forward to receiving your consultation responses and please do make use of the webinar and Code drop-in session if you feel these would be useful.

Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Richard Blakeway', written in a cursive style.

Richard Blakeway
Housing Ombudsman