

AGENDA ITEM 7

Title: John Pease Cottages Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025-26	Date of Meeting: 14 th September 2026
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Job Title: Executive Director of Customers and Director of Customer Experience and Transformation	
Strategic Heading: Compliance	Status: Decision
Purpose: To share annual performance, themes identified, and the service improvements implemented as a result. To share the reviewed complaints handling self-assessment.	
Recommendation: Board is recommended to approve the self-assessment and the actions contained in the report.	

1. Context

The statutory Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code came into effect on 1 April 2024. It operates alongside the Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard. The Standard requires registered providers to ensure that complaints are addressed fairly, effectively and promptly; that their complaints process is simple, accessible and publicised; and that tenants receive information about the complaints received and how learning from complaints is used to improve services.

Sections 8.1 and 8.2 of the Code state that landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge. The report must include:

- The annual self-assessment against the Code, to ensure the landlord's complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.
- A qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance, including a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept.
- Any findings of non-compliance with the Code by the Ombudsman.
- The service improvements made as a result of learning from complaints.
- Any annual report about the landlord's performance issued by the Ombudsman.
- Any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman relating to the landlord's work.

The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be presented to the landlord's governing body and published in the complaints section of its website. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside it.

Our focus remains on learning from complaints and improving services. During 2025/26, learning from complaints has been used to strengthen governance, improve customer communication and shape service improvement activity, particularly within repairs and contractor management.

2. Executive Summary

John Pease Cottages remained fully compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code during 2025/26, with no areas of non-compliance identified.

Two formal complaints were received during the year, compared with none in 2024/25. Both complaints were responded to within the required timescale, resulting in 100% compliance with the Stage One response target.

One of the two complaints was upheld. Neither complaint progressed to Stage Two.

Given the small number of complaints received, percentage changes should be interpreted with care. However, the results provide assurance that complaints were handled promptly and resolved at Stage One.

John Pease Cottages will continue to review the learning from complaints, complete any agreed actions and maintain compliance with the Complaint Handling Code.

Board is asked to approve the annual self-assessment and the proposed service improvement actions for 2026/27.

3. Self-Assessment Against the Complaints Handling Code

The 2026 self-assessment is attached at Appendix One. The responsible officer for complaints is the Executive Director of Customers.

John Pease Cottages is fully compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, with no areas of non-compliance.

4. Complaints Performance 2025-26

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Number of formal complaints received during the year	1	1	0	2
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints responded to within target (The standard is 10 working days which can be increased to 20 with the agreement of the customer)	100%	0%	N/A	100%
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints upheld	100%	100%	N/A	50%
Number of complaints progressing to Stage 2	0	0	0	0
Percentage of Stage 2 complaints responded to within target - 20 working days	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of Stage 2 complaints upheld	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

The number of formal complaints received during 2025/26 increased to two, compared with none in 2024/25. Given the very small number of complaints received, it is not possible to identify a wider trend from this increase.

Both complaints were responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales. One complaint was upheld and neither progressed to Stage Two.

Each complaint is reviewed individually to identify any learning and required service improvements. Progress against agreed actions is monitored to ensure they are completed.

Complaint performance, outcomes and learning are reported to Board through the annual complaints performance and service improvement report.

a. Stage One Complaints

Stage One Complaints by service area	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Property Maintenance / Property Services	1	1	0	2
Total	1	1	1	2

Table 1 Overview of Stage 1 Complaints - Category

The complaints received in 2025/26 were both regarding Property Services. One was for grounds maintenance as a hedge had not been cut back which was overhanging the public footpath. On investigation the contractor was unable to cut it back as per the schedule due to nesting birds. The contractor revisited the scheme and were now able to complete the work. This complaint was not upheld.

The other complaint was for poor communication from a flooring contractor and the failure of a shower board recently fitted that had led to water damage. Work was completed to rectify the shower area and lay the new flooring to the tenants' satisfaction. The tenant was awarded £231 compensation for loss of the use of the bathroom for the week.

b. Stage Two Complaints

There were no stage 2 complaints received during 2025/26 from John Pease Cottage tenants.

5. Satisfaction with complaints handling

A transactional survey is sent to customers following the closure of their complaint. We did not receive a response from either customer to their surveys.

6. Refused Complaints

During 2025/26 there were no complaints that we refused to take.

We have a procedure for recording any refusals in line with section 8 of the Complaints Policy and the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

These would be recorded as a refused complaint on the housing management system in the complaints module, along with the correspondence explaining the reason.

7. Update on Planned improvements for 2025/26

Due to the nature of the small number of complaints received and handled by the same North Star team, the planned improvements are the same as the North Star improvements, to ensure consistency and continued improvement across both John Pease Cottages and North Star.

Service improvement	Lead	Update
Stage One complaints to be led by Service Managers and Heads of Service, with support from Team Managers and Directors as needed.	Director of Customer Experience & Transformation	Implemented, with additional consistency and oversight provided by the dedicated Complaints Lead and regular Complaint Clinics.
Embed Heartbeat values - trust, listening and learning, empathy and flexibility - into complaints activity.	Directors and Heads of Service	Progress made through manager guidance, improved response templates, customer involvement and stronger focus on tone, empathy and vulnerability.
Evaluate the Housing Management System for	Director of Customer	Reporting and oversight improved (addition of tags to reporting).

Service improvement	Lead	Update
reporting, action monitoring and theme identification.	Experience & Transformation	Further work is planned to strengthen action tracking, trend analysis and links to operational performance.
Enhance compensation and remedy guidance.	Director of Customer Experience & Transformation	Improved guidance and monitoring introduced, with compensation and remedies reviewed through complaint governance arrangements.
Deliver refresher training for managers on the complaints process and system.	Director of Customer Experience & Transformation	Training and guidance on complaints strengthened, with continued focus needed on empathy, vulnerability, delivering agreed outcomes and high-quality responses.

Table 2 Progress on Planned Improvements 2025/26

8. Planned Service Improvements 2026/27

Due to the nature of the small number of complaints received and handled by the same North Star team, the planned improvements are the same as the North Star improvements, to ensure consistency and continued improvement across both John Pease Cottages and North Star.

Service improvement	2025/26 baseline	2026/27 measure / target	Lead
Improve complaint learning and action tracking so themes, owners, due dates and outcomes are visible and actions are demonstrably completed.	Learning captured through complaint processes but tracking and assurance requires strengthening.	100% of agreed complaint learning actions to have a named owner and target date, with overdue actions reported through Complaint Clinics.	Director of Customer Experience & Transformation
Develop analysis of complaint trends by geography, tenure, customer characteristics, service requests and satisfaction to identify disparities and target improvement.	Initial demographic analysis undertaken during 2025/26.	Quarterly analysis introduced during 2026/27, with material disparities or emerging trends identified, investigated and actions reported.	Director of Customer Experience & Transformation
Maintain compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.	Full compliance reported through the 2025/26 self-assessment.	Maintain 100% compliance with the Code and publish the annual self-assessment, complaints report and governing body response within required timescales.	Director of Customer Experience & Transformation

Service improvement	2025/26 baseline	2026/27 measure / target	Lead
Monitor compensation and remedies to ensure fair and consistent outcomes and appropriate contractor recovery.	2025/26 compensation expenditure monitored through complaints reporting.	Quarterly monitoring of compensation by service, reason and contractor, including recovery of contractor-attributable costs where appropriate.	Director of Customer Experience & Transformation
Strengthen service ownership and follow-through to reduce complaints arising from poor hand-offs, incorrect closure of cases/jobs, unclear ownership and agreed actions not being progressed. These have been categorised as “process” complaints.	Process-related complaints accounted for 16.7% of complaints, increasing from 10.5% in 2023/24 and 16.1% in 2024/25. Analysis identified recurring issues around hand-offs, ownership, incorrect closure and actions not being followed through.	Reduce process-related complaints as a proportion of overall complaints from 16.7%, with quarterly analysis used to identify recurring service failures and ensure corrective actions have a named owner and are tracked to completion.	Director of Customer Experience & Transformation / relevant Service Directors

Table 3 Proposed Service Improvements for 2026/27

These actions form part of North Star's wider commitment to putting customers at the centre of service design and ensuring their voices drive learning, action and accountability.

9. Housing Ombudsman Determinations and Reports

John Pease Cottages remained fully compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code throughout 2025/26. There have been no cases taken to the Housing Ombudsman and there were no Complaint Handling Failure Orders issued during the year.

Learning from Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Reports continues to be reviewed and incorporated into policies, training and complaint handling processes. External scanning and gap analysis against Spotlight Reports are a part of the MRC meeting agenda.

10. Member Responsible for Complaints Annual Comment

John Pease Cottages Board recognises the importance of an open, transparent and accountable complaints culture. Throughout 2025/26 the Board has continued to receive regular assurance regarding complaint performance, emerging themes and organisational learning.

The Board is satisfied that John Pease Cottages continues to comply with the Complaint Handling Code and supports the priorities identified within this report for continued improvement during 2026/27.

11. Next Steps

- We will publish the latest self-assessment alongside a copy of this report and the governing body response on our website.
- We will share the report with involved tenants groups, including TTV, and seek feedback on areas for further improvement.
- We will continue to provide Board with quarterly performance updates on complaints and an annual report on compliance with the Code.
- The Member Responsible for Complaints will continue to meet with staff to review patterns, learning and improvements.

12. Recommendations

Board is recommended to approve the self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code and the actions outlined in this report.

We are seeking approval for:

- Section 8 - Planned Service Improvements 2026/27
- Appendix 1 - self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code

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Appendix 1: Self-assessment form

This self-assessment against The Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code covers the arrangements in place for North Star and John Pease Cottages. For the purpose of the self-assessment where North Star is referenced, this will include arrangements for John Pease Cottages.

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 / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation of North Star approach
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <i>'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'</i>	Yes	Section 1 of the Complaints Policy	Definition of a complaint in North Star/John Pease Cottages (JPC) Complaints Policy is the same as the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) definition.
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	Sections 6 and 7 of the Complaints Policy	If a customer gives permission, a complaint submitted via a third party or representative will be managed in line with the complaints policy. The customer does not need to use the word "complaint". We will try to resolve any expression of dissatisfaction with the service quickly and will give the customer a choice to make a complaint if they remain dissatisfied.
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	Definitions in sections 1 and 2 of the Complaints Policy. Service Requests are in section 9 of the Complaints Policy	The Policy includes the definitions of a complaint and a service request. Service requests are not recorded as a complaint but are recorded separately along with the actions taken. Service requests and complaints are recorded in the same system, to allow escalation and analysis. Service requests are monitored for trends and issues that will require further action.
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	Sections 7 and 9 of the Complaints Policy	Following the response of a service request, if the customer remains dissatisfied, the option to escalate the issue to a complaint will be offered. Any actions to address their service request will continue.
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	Satisfaction surveys include this information on how to complain.	Satisfaction transactional surveys include it in the text/email. A sentence on how to make a complaint is read out to tenants on a TSM survey call.

Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation of John Pease Cottages (North Star)s approach
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	Section 8 of the Complaints Policy	The policy states that we will write and explain the reasons why we will not accept a complaint. Each case will be considered on its own merits.
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	Section 8 of the Complaints Policy	The exclusions included in the policy comply with the acceptable exclusions in the Complaint Handling Code
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	Section 8 of the Complaints Policy	Complaints regarding issues within the last 12 months will be accepted unless one of the exclusions in Section 8 applies but the decision to exclude it will be considered on its own merits.
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	Section 8 of the Complaints Policy	The customer will be contacted in explaining the reason for not accepting the complaint with information on how to contact the Housing Ombudsman service if they do not agree with the decision.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Section 8 of the Complaints Policy	The policy states that each case for excluding from the complaints procedure will be considered on its own merits.

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	Section 7 and section 16 of the Complaints Policy	Complaints are accepted through a variety of different channels to suit the customer. The policy also gives examples of some of the adjustments we will make to ensure no one is disadvantaged in being able to make a complaint. Complaints can be made in person, in writing, by telephone, by email, via our website, through another person or advocate, through our surveys and via social media.
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	Sections 3 and 7 of the Complaints Policy	Any member of staff will accept a complaint, record it and forward to the Complaints Lead for allocation. All front-line housing, CST staff and non-front line staff have received training on resolving complaints and systems that was reissued in July 2025.
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	Quarterly report to Board	Volume of complaints are monitored, trends analysed and levels are benchmarked against other providers. The detail is reported to Board and level of complaints is published in our Tenant Satisfaction Measures.
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	Complaints Policy, North Star website	A leaflet setting out how the requirements of 3.4 is available on the website and a clear and simple poster with QR code link is displayed at supported housing schemes and in reception areas. The Complaints Policy is published on the complaints page of the North Star website and has a tool that enables translation, and access to a range of tools to provide support to people who have audio or visual needs. This meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010
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	Section 5 of the Complaints Policy	The policy sets out how we will publicise details of the complaints policy on the website, in the tenants' newsletter, leaflets, social media and at every supported housing service. The policy contains information about the HOS with its address and its website. Details on the Housing Ombudsman service are provided in all complaint's correspondence.
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	Section 6 of the Complaints Policy	The policy states that a customer can have a representative to deal with their complaint on their behalf.
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	Section 5 of Complaints Policy Website	The policy contains the Housing Ombudsman contact details, and all complaints correspondence informs the customer that they can contact the Housing Ombudsman for help and advice at any point during the complaints process.

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	The Director of Customer Experience and Transformation is the "complaints officer"	The Director of Customer Experience and Transformation has overall responsibility for complaint handling, liaising with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the Board.
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	Complaints records	The Director of Customer Experience and Transformation is experienced in handling complaints and has access to staff at all levels to ensure complaints are responded to in a timely manner. Service Managers dealing with complaints are experienced and are developed to deliver excellent customer service whilst also having the autonomy and authority to resolve complaints quickly and award compensation where appropriate.
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	Training records Complaints reporting to Board	The Director of Customer Experience and Transformation chairs a complaints meeting every six weeks with Service Managers to discuss any performance issues, emerging trends/patterns, and agree the action required and a timescale. The learning is shared across teams. Quarterly meetings with the Member Responsible for Complaints, to review performance, ombudsman reports and sector analysis. Quarterly reporting to Board covers learning and actions from complaint handling. All staff receive complaints training every two years with the customer services team (CST) receiving more frequent training on service requests and complaints. Training is refreshed every 12 months.

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	Complaints Policy	North Star/JPC has a single complaints policy and procedure for all complaints. The policy was reviewed in June 2026.
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	Complaints Policy Complaints and Service request records on the system	North Star/JPC has a two-stage complaint process as per the Complaints Handling Code. Service requests are monitored to ensure that they are not used to prevent issues progressing to complaints.
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	Complaints Policy	North Star/JPC has a two-stage complaint process as per the Complaints Handling Code.
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage,	Yes	Complaints Policy Complaints records	All complaints are handled by North Star managers and if input from a third party i.e., contractor is required, this will be included in the managers investigation and

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	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.			completed within North Star/John Pease Cottages two stage complaints process. Customers would not need to go through the contractors' complaints process.
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	Complaints Policy	Complaints are handled by a North Star manager and not passed to third parties to handle the complaint.
5.6	When a complaint is at Stage 1 or 2 landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking.	Yes	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	Staff are trained to clarify what the complaint is about and the outcome that is being sought. Managers handling the complaint will contact the resident to discuss the complaint and the outcome they are seeking.
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	Acknowledgement letters Section 8 of the Complaints Policy	Acknowledgement letters clarify the complaint and any areas that North Star is not responsible for would be stated. If the whole complaint was for a service not provided by North Star/John Pease Cottages, the resident, would be informed in writing as per Section 8 of the Complaints Policy.
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	Sections 10 and 12 of the Complaints Policy	Managers and Directors of North Star have developed a framework in which complaints will be managed. This covers expectations, behaviours and stresses the importance of effective resolution and learning. At each stage of complaints handling, the manager will contact the customer to discuss the complaint and the outcome the customer is seeking and record this. Managers will handle complaints fairly and consider information and evidence carefully. Any actual/perceived conflict of interest will be discussed with the Complaints Officer and allocated to an alternative manager if appropriate.
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	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	The policy states that the resident must be contacted to agree any extension to the timescales and agree intervals to keep them informed of progress.
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	Section 16 of the Complaints Policy. Housing System Tenancy records	The policy states that North Star/JPC will provide any necessary adjustment possible such as interpreter, large print, extra time to respond and additional support as required. This will be noted on the complaints record and the housing system can record any disability the resident discloses. A review date can be added as a prompt to review this data.
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	Section 8 of the Complaints Policy	The policy states the exceptional reasons for not accepting or escalating a complaint for both stages of the complaints process.
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	Individual complaints records recorded on the Complaints section of the Housing system.	Full complaints records are recorded linked to the tenants' records and includes relevant dates, supporting documents, letters, and outcomes. All data is held on Microsoft Dynamics.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	Complaints Policy Compensation and Remedy Policy	The policy and staff training focuses on complaint resolution at any stage of the process from taking a service request to a stage two complaint. Resolving the issue is the priority.
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	Persistent and Vexatious Complaints Policy	North Star/JPC has a Persistent and Vexatious Complaints Policy to manage any unacceptable behaviour from customers or their representatives. Para 4 of the policy states review periods will be provided to the tenant.
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	Persistent and Vexatious Complaints Policy	The Persistent and Vexatious Complaints Policy has a section on equality and has regard for the Equality Act 2010.

Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	Yes	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	When a manager receives a complaint that is complex and identifies that it will take longer than the 10 working days to respond, we will inform the customer at the earliest opportunity to agree a revised timescale with the customer. This action is recorded on the complaints record and the target date adjusted on the system.
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	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	Complaints are logged onto the system and acknowledged within two working days. This is recorded and assurance obtained through regular reports.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy Complaints system records	All final response letters are recorded on the system. If a response cannot be made within 10 days this is discussed with the customer. Assurance is obtained through regular reports.
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	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy Complaints system records	The policy states that any extensions must be explained and agreed with the customer. This is recorded on the complaints system. Any extension beyond a further 10 days must be approved by a Director and must have good reason that has been explained and agreed with the customer. This would only happen in complex cases.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy Complaints system records	All complaints correspondence and leaflets have a paragraph informing the customers of their right to contact the Housing Ombudsman and include the link to the HOS website.
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	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy Complaints system records	The policy states this and any outstanding actions should be entered as tasks on the complaint record on the system and followed up to ensure the actions/work have been completed.
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	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	The Complaints Policy states that all issues raised will be investigated and responded to separately within the investigation and in the final response letter.
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	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	The policy states where additional complaints are raised during the stage one investigation, they will be incorporated within the complaint response if they are related. If the response has been issued or it would unreasonably delay the response or its unrelated then they are recorded as a new complaint.
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	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	These are listed in the stage 1 guidance of the policy

Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	The stage one final response letter provides escalation details should they remain dissatisfied with the stage one outcome. Stage two is the final stage in North Star/John Pease Cottages Complaints Policy.
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	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	North Star/John Pease Cottages policy is to record and acknowledge receipt of a stage two complaint within two working days and within the guidance set out in the Complaint Handling Code.
6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to	Yes	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	The policy asks officers to understand the issues the customer is unhappy about and the outcomes they are seeking but we would not refuse to escalate to stage

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.			two if they did not give this to us. Saying they are unhappy with the outcome and that they want to escalate to next stage is sufficient to progress to stage two.
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	The policy states that it will be considered by a Head of Service, Director or Executive Director that has not been involved in the stage one investigation.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	North Star/John Pease Cottages policy is to investigate and respond to a stage two complaint within 10 working days therefore within the guidance set out in the Complaint Handling Code.
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	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	North Star/John Pease Cottages policy states that an extension of 10 working days can be agreed with the customer if the review cannot be concluded within the initial timescale. We are therefore within the timescale set out with the Complaint Handling Code of an additional 20 working days.
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	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	The acknowledgement letter for a stage two complaint includes the Housing Ombudsman's contact details and the customer's rights to contact them for advice at any stage of the landlord's complaints process. It also contains the HOS website link
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	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	This applies to both stages in the complaints procedure and is stated in the policy. As per 6.6 above, actions are tracked using the complaints system.
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	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	The Complaints Policy states that all issues under a complaint will be investigated and responded to separately within the investigation and in the final response letter.
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.		Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	These are listed in the stage two guidance of the policy.
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	Section 12 of the Complaints Policy	The stage two review will be completed by a Head of Service, Director or Executive Director and will involve relevant staff needed to make a final response. The relevant Executive Director has oversight of the stage two process and the final response.

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	Complaints Policy	This is covered in the expected responses in the stage one or two outcome letters. Our focus is to put things right to the satisfaction of the customer. Letters will include an apology when something has gone wrong and set out the actions to remedy this and include any financial compensation. Any change in policies and procedures will also be recorded on the complaints system for follow up action.
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Complaints policy Compensation and Remedies Policy Repairs Handbook	A remedy will be agreed with the customer and will reflect the impact on the customer. Any compensation/remedy will be awarded in line with the Compensation and Remedy Policy.
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	Complaints policy Compensation and Remedies Policy	Remedies are discussed and agreed with the customer prior to the response letter being sent. The response letter will give details of remedies and dates/amounts/work agreed. Any outstanding works will be recorded on the system and a task raised to ensure completion is followed through.
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	Compensation and Remedies Policy	The latest guidance from the Ombudsman is reflected in our policy

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;	Yes	Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025-26 Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment 2026	The Annual Complaints and Service Improvements report will be reported to Board on 14th September 2026 along with the reviewed self-assessment for April 2026. The report follows the requirements listed in 8.1. The Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report will be published on the website for customers/stakeholders following the Board meeting along with Boards response and submitted to the HO by 30th September 2026. The report will also be shared with the Tenants Performance Group. Complaints are reported quarterly to Board on numbers and outcomes along with actions taken to resolve themes in complaints.

	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.		Board Performance Reports Website	Last year the Annual Complaints and Service Improvements report was approved by Board on 16 th June 2025. The report along with the self-assessment that was approved by Board were published on the website along with a customer friendly version of the report.
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	The report will be brought to Board in September 2026.	The report will cover all relevant expectations defined in the code. Report including response by responsible Board member to be published on website by 30 th September 2026.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	N/A	Review of the self-assessment completed by Board and MRC	A self-assessment will be undertaken should there be a significant restructure, merger or change in procedure but none of these applied for 2025-26.
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	N/A	N/A	North Star/JPC has not received any Ombudsman investigations during 2025-26. However, if we were asked to review and update the self-assessment following any future investigation then this would be completed and documented directly to the Housing Ombudsman within their set timescale.
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.	N/A	This would be supported by John Pease Cottages (North Star)'s disaster recovery process.	The Ombudsman will be informed if North Star/JPC is unable to comply with the Complaint Handling Code. A timescale for returning to compliance will be provided and affected residents will be informed

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	Recorded on the Complaints system	Managers cannot close a complaint on the system unless they input any service Improvements/actions to be taken. This is included in a monitoring report to the Head of Service and shared with Managers
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	Recorded on complaints system	Monthly reports are produced by the Complaints Lead with details of complaints by department, type, and contractor. Director of Customer Experience and Transformation regularly meets with Customer Services Team to understand data/intelligence from front line services. Regular meetings are held between Director of Customer Experience and Transformation and relevant service managers who manage stage one complaints to identify any issues and trends to make positive changes and share best practice and learning. Quarterly updates are shared with Board and SMT. These include actions taken to address emerging issues and changes to service delivery. The Complaints Lead meets with contractors on a

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
				weekly basis to discuss complaints, share best practice and identify any learning to improve service delivery.
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	Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvements Report 2025-26 Board Performance Reports	Quarterly and annual Performance reports to Board give a summary of complaints with comments on complaints issues by service area and learning and improvements. Information is also shared in the tenant newsletter, and on the website. The Tenants Performance Group receive quarterly information on complaints and actions taken to improve.
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		Complaints handling performance comes under the remit of the Executive Director of Customers. All Heads of Service/ Directors take responsibility for actioning any systemic issues, risks and changes to policy that arise.
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	Board volunteers have been sought	The MRC is Bill Fullen and was appointed in March 2026, replacing Joanne Tood (Jan 2026 – March 2026) who became Vice Chair, who replaced Nicki Clarke, who held the MRC role until January 2026.
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		The appointed member, Bill Fullen, has access to the appropriate staff and will ensure that the governing body received regular information on complaints.
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	Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report Board Performance report	Quarterly Performance reports to Board give a summary of complaints with comments on complaints issues by service area which will include any learning and improvements. Any Housing Ombudsman investigations concluded are also reported in the quarterly performance reports. North Star has had one investigation since 2020 and the outcome was reported to Board in the quarter 3 Performance Report 2023-24. The Annual Complaints performance and service improvements report will go to Board in September 2026.
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	Section 3 of the Complaints Policy	These standard objectives have been incorporated into our principles for complaint handling.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.			