

Appendix 9.2 : Self-assessment form

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
1.2	<p>A complaint must be defined as:</p> <p><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></p>	Yes	<p>Complaints and Compliments policy</p> <p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>2.1 We adopt the Housing Ombudsman’s definition of a complaint as follows:</p> <p>‘An Expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.’</p> <p>Frontline staff have received training on the policy and definition of complaints.</p>	<p>Square Roots policy, which is on our website.</p> <p>Definition set out in policy.</p>
1.3	<p>A resident does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses</p>	Yes	<p>Frontline staff have received training on the policy and definition of complaints. Square</p>	

	<p>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.</p>		<p>Roots hold internal cases that provide examples of staff compliance.</p> <p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>2.1 We adopt the Housing Ombudsman's definition of a complaint as follows:</p> <p>'An Expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.'</p> <p>2.2 A customer does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such.</p>	
1.4	<p>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</p>	Yes	<p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>2.3 We adopt the Housing Ombudsman definition of a service request as follows:</p>	

	to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.		- <i>'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.'</i>	
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	<p>Square Roots will separate service request and complaints and manage each in line with the relevant policy. Staff are trained to recognise when the handling of a service request causes dissatisfaction and needs to be logged as a complaint. This does not prejudice the progression of a service request.</p> <p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>2.3 We adopt the Housing Ombudsman definition of a service request as follows:</p> <p>- <i>'A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right.'</i></p>	

			<i>Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored, and reviewed regularly.'</i>	
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.	No		If a customer says that they are dissatisfied and they wish to be contacted, under data protection, Square Roots will discuss this with them. However, information on how to complain is not included on every survey sent by Square Roots. Square Roots will review all surveys and add this information by 7 th March 2025.

Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	<p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>2.4 Exclusions will not be applied using a blanket approach, each case will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, looking at the individual's circumstances.</p> <p>No complaints have been denied by Square Roots.</p>	
2.2	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. 	Yes	<p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p><u>Exclusions</u></p> <p>2.2 The following matters are not classed as complaints under this policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports of anti-social behaviour or harassment, 	The basis for excluding a complaint is set out in Square Roots' policy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 		<p>which are covered by separate policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A service request e.g., a repair request. • Survey feedback e.g., from information you provide from our nominated feedback provider. • Complaints about services not authorised by Square Roots. • Where legal proceedings (by or against Square Roots), including personal injury accident claims have been initiated the case will be dealt with separately under a separate policy. • Complaints about any policy, process or rule of law will likely be excluded however Square Roots will review the application of these in relation to each complaint and then decide whether it is excluded or not. <p>2.3 We will only investigate complaints relating to our</p>	
--	--	--	---	--

			<p>services that have been provided within the previous twelve months. However, we will review historical concerns if there is evidence of a recurring problem and will also take into consideration any circumstances that may have prevented a complaint from being raised earlier.</p> <p>2.4 Exclusions will not be applied using a blanket approach, each case will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, looking at the individual's circumstances.</p>	
2.3	<p>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.</p>	Yes	<p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>2.3 We will only investigate complaints relating to our services that have been provided within the previous twelve months. However, we will review historical concerns if there is evidence of a recurring problem and will also take into consideration any circumstances that may have prevented a</p>	<p>Square Roots' Complaints and Compliments Policy sets out the time limit, however, we will apply discretion if there is evidence of a recurring problem</p>

			<p>complaint from being raised earlier.</p> <p>2.4 Exclusions will not be applied using a blanket approach, each case will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, looking at the individual's circumstances.</p>	
2.4	<p>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.</p>	No		<p>Square Roots have not refused any complaints. However, this is not explicit in Square Roots' current Complaints and Compliments policy that customers have the right to take their case to the Housing Ombudsman.</p> <p>The Complaints and Compliments policy will be amended to reflect this point by 7th March 2025</p>
2.5	<p>Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.</p>	Yes	<p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>2.4 Exclusions will not be applied using a blanket approach, each case will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, looking at the individual's circumstances.</p>	

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	<p>Square Roots customer website:</p> <p>Get In Touch Square Roots</p> <p>We also have a dedicated page online for how to make a complaint How To Square Roots</p> <p>The Square Roots website sets out complaints can be made online, via our customer portal, on the telephone or in writing, which is all set out in the Complaints and Compliments policy, as well as the Square Roots website.</p> <p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>4 Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>4.1 In line with our Diversity and Inclusion commitments all complainants will</p>	<p>Square Roots will be adding complaints information to noticeboards from April 2025 to increase accessibility.</p> <p>Duties under Equality Act 2010 set out in Square Roots Complaints and Compliments policy section 4.</p>

			<p>be treated fairly, equally and with respect regardless of their gender, race, age, disability, faith, marital status, sexual orientation, or other distinction.</p> <p>4.2 Reasonable adjustments in line with the Equalities Act such as accessibility to discuss complaints of information in a different format e.g., large print, audio tape, an alternative language, with staff and or where the provision services of a translator are required can be provided upon request.</p> <p>4.3 If we feel that you require support, we may signpost you to agencies such as Citizens Advice to help facilitate a resolution.</p>	
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	<p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>2.10 Complaints and compliments can be made in different ways:</p>	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By emailing: customerservices@squareroots.co.uk • By calling: 0333 666 0102 <p>All Square Roots frontline staff are aware of the complaints process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In writing, addressed to Customer Services Manager at: Square Roots Registered Provider Ltd 1 York Road Uxbridge UX8 1RN 	
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	<p>Evidence of accessibility and publication set out in 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2 and 3.2 of this self-assessment.</p> <p>In 16 months, we have had 5 complaints, 3 at stage one, 1 at stage two and 1 at stage 3. 4 of the 5 complaints were about managing repairs, which occurred during move in, lessons were learnt from this and applied to future handovers, and Square Roots have seen less complaints in this area as a result.</p>	<p>Square Roots' offer customers a variety of ways to complaint, customers are signposted to make a complaint even if the word complaint is not used and complaints are not unreasonably restricted.</p> <p>Complaints received are representative of Square Roots' size and operating for 16 months.</p>
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents.	Yes	As evidenced in section 1.2 of this self-assessment	Policy is on Square Roots website and is provided as

	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.		<p>Link to Complaints and Compliments Policy in 1.2. Extract:</p> <p>Stage 1- 10 working days.</p> <p>Stage 2- 20 working days</p>	<p>part of onboarding new customers.</p> <p>Section 2.14 of Square Roots Complaints and Compliments policy clearly highlights complaint stages and timescales for our customers</p>
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	No		<p>Square Roots' approach to publicising the policy and information about the Code is not currently documented.</p> <p>The Complaints and Compliments policy will be amended to reflect this point</p>
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	<p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>2.5 This policy extends to all our customers including individuals (or their advocates), groups of people or organisations who pay for, receive. services from or hold reasonable expectations of the organisation as a service provider.</p> <p>9 Member Enquiries</p>	<p>Policy clearly accepts complaints from advocates including complaints from Members</p>

			<p>9.1 We manage Member Enquiries (from MPs or Councillors) in the same way. we would manage an enquiry from our customer.</p>	
3.7	<p>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.</p>	Yes	<p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>8 Housing Ombudsman Service</p> <p>8.1 If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your Complaint you. Right to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS).</p> <p>Extract form complaint response template Stage one and two:</p> <p>If you are dissatisfied with our Stage 1 response, you should reply within 30 days explaining why you remain dissatisfied and what you are seeking as an outcome. Your complaint will then be reviewed by (Name of employee and position) at stage two. Please note you can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any point during the complaint process. It cannot investigate your complaint whilst your complaint is going through our internal complaints procedure</p>	<p>Covered in Square Roots Complaints and Compliments policy as well as Stage one and two complaint response letters. We are using Ombudsman information for residents' leaflet in response</p> <p>We will update our website with a link to the Ombudsman's website. This will be live by April 2025.</p>

			<p>however the Ombudsman may be able to help you, and your landlord reach a resolution. Their contact details are:</p> <p>0300 111 3000 https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/ info@housing-ombsman.org.uk <i>Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ</i></p>	
--	--	--	---	--

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	<p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>12.2 Square Roots have a complaints officer, the Head of Compliance & Customer Services who is responsible.</p>	
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	<p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>1.2 Our aim will always be to resolve complaints as quickly as possible by taking an open, accountable and outcome focused approach.</p> <p>1.3 We recognise that complaints represent an opportunity to rebuild trust with our customers as well as providing us with opportunities to learn and</p>	Square Roots understands the importance of complaints and staff are empowered to resolve complaints promptly and fairly

			make service improvements. The Executive Team reviews complaints and their responses to ensure they meet the requirements of the policy.	
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	<p>Square Roots review the Ombudsman centre for, Landlord portal and resource page.</p> <p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>12.1 All staff across the organisation are responsible for the implementation of this policy and implementing lessons learnt.</p>	<p>Complaints are treated as a priority and to date all have been logged, acknowledged, and responded to within the guidelines set out in the Code.</p> <p>All staff have received complaints training and continue to keep knowledge up to date.</p>

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	<p>Square Roots have a single policy in place for dealing with all complaints</p> <p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p>	

			2.11 All complaints however made will be processed in line with this policy and the time frames set out in 2.13 below. All complaints will be acknowledged. And logged within 5 days.	
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	Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy: 2.14 We have a two-stage complaint process:	Square Roots have two stages. Complaints or expressions of dissatisfaction are treated as stage 1 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	Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy: 2.14 We have a two-stage complaint process:	
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	Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy: 2.14 We have a two-stage complaint process:	Both stages are dealt with internally and not handled by any third party
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:	Both stages are dealt with internally and not handled by any third party

			2.14 We have a two-stage complaint process:	
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	<p>Square Roots Stage one/two response letter template:</p> <p>You complained to us about:</p> <p>I understand that to resolve your complaint you are seeking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Complaints and Compliments Procedure:</p> <p>Lead handler to attempt to contact complainant within 5 working days of receipt to discuss complaint- clarifying. What the complaint is about, the impact on them, and what they are seeking as a resolution.</p>	
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	<p>Square Roots staff have received training on dealing with complex complaints.</p> <p>The complaint definition is set out in the complaint response and clarity is provided on any areas of responsibility and who this falls to</p>	

5.8	<p>At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	Square Roots staff have received training on complaint handling in line with the Code	
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	<p>Deadlines are tracked using our relevant systems.</p> <p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>Section 2.14 Stage 1 can be extended by a further 10 working days and Stage 2 by 20 working days, if warranted – customers will be kept fully apprised of any. Extensions of time required.</p>	
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	Yes	<p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>Square Roots are compliant with the Equality Act 2010</p>	

	<p>well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.</p>		<p>Any declared disability or vulnerability is captured on our CRM system and reviewed when managing the complaint.</p> <p>Extract form Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>4.2 Reasonable adjustments in line with the Equalities Act such as accessibility to discuss complaints of information in a different format e.g., large print, audio tape, an alternative language, with staff and or where the provision services of a translator are required can be provided upon request.</p>	
5.11	<p>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.</p>	Yes	<p>Square Roots staff are trained on complaint handling. Escalation is offered at each stage of the complaints process, and the customer is signposted to the Housing Ombudsman.</p> <p>No exclusions are stated in Square Roots' Complaints and Compliments policy, which prevent escalation.</p>	

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	All information relating to complaints is logged and documents stored on our Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) system	
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	Square Roots has a Compensation & Redress policy which sets out the types of redress and what this should look like	
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	<p>Square Roots has an Unacceptable Behaviour policy, which links to the complaints policy.</p> <p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>5 Unreasonable or Persistent Complainants</p> <p>5.1 We expect all customers to behave reasonably and cooperate with us throughout the process.</p>	

			<p>5.2 If you raise multiple complaints at the same time, we will provide you with one case number and point of contact, where possible. If you raise further concerns when we have already issued a response, or it would unreasonably delay our response, we will log and provide a new case number.</p> <p>5.3 We will aim to resolve the complaint in line with our timeframe in section 2.13 above.</p> <p>5.4 All forms of unreasonable behaviour will be covered under our Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.</p>	
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.	No	<p>Link to Unacceptable Behaviour policy:</p> <p>Unacceptable Behaviour Policy</p>	This is being carried out in practice, but not explicit in policy. To date no customers have had restrictions applied to their contact. However, relevant policies will be amended to include 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	<p>Square Roots in its procedure sets out timelines for acknowledgement, review and response, which ensure that complaints are responded to within 10 working days.</p> <p>A review is completed with 3 working days and the complaint handler assigned so it is understood at an early stage whether a complaint can be responded to within 10 working days, or if an extension is required due to the complexity, so the customer is alerted of this at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Square Roots have responded to all complaints on time, requesting an extension on one occasion for a complex complaint.</p>	

			All stage one complaints have been completed within the timelines set out in the Code.	
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	Square Roots' Complaints and Compliments policy section 2.14 states that acknowledgment will be in 3 working days	
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Square Roots' Complaints and Compliments policy states that acknowledgment will be in 10 working days	
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	Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy section 2.14: Stage 1 can be extended by a further 10 working days.	
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.	No	The extension time and timescales are explained; however the Ombudsman details are not included	Square Roots will draft a template that includes contact details for the Ombudsman. This will be completed by 28 th February 2025.
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	Yes	Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:	

	the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.		7.2 We may close a complaint even if actions are outstanding, such as a repair, as long as we have provided clear guidance and timelines on what will happen next.	
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	This is set out in Square Roots' Complaints and Compliments procedure section 4.1	
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	Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy: 5.2 If you raise multiple complaints at the same time, we will provide you with one case number and point of contact, where possible. If you raise further concerns when we have already issued a response, or it would unreasonably delay our response, we will log and provide a new case number.	
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;	Yes	This is set out in Square Roots' Complaints and Compliments procedure and complaint response templates.	

	<p>c. the decision on the complaint;</p> <p>d. the reasons for any decisions made;</p> <p>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</p> <p>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</p> <p>g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.</p>			
--	--	--	--	--

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	This is set out in Square Roots' Complaints and Compliments policy section 2.14	
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	Square Roots' Complaints and Compliments policy states in section 2.14 that acknowledgment will be in 3 working days	
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	Square Roots will enquire why the customer is dissatisfied in order to provide a better response, however, a request to escalate will not be denied if the information is not provided.	

6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	This is set out in Square Roots' Complaints and Compliments policy section 2.14	
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Square Roots' Complaints and Compliments policy section 2.14 states that acknowledgment will be in 20 working days	
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	This is set out in Square Roots' Complaints and Compliments policy section 2.14	
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.	No	The extension time and timescales are explained; however the Ombudsman details are not included	Square Roots will draft a template that includes contact details for the Ombudsman. This will be completed by 28 th February 2025.
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	Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy: 7.2 We may close a complaint even if actions are outstanding, such as a repair, as long as we have provided clear guidance	

			and timelines on what will happen next.	
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	This is set out in Square Roots' Complaints and Compliments procedure section 4.1 and complaint response templates.	
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	This is set out in Square Roots' Complaints and Compliments procedure section 4.1 and complaint response templates.	
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	This is set out in Square Roots' Complaints and Compliments policy section 2.14. Customers are signposted to the Ombudsman as the next stage	

Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>This is set out in Square Roots' Compensation & Redress policy, for example:</p> <p>3.3 Redress will not always be financial payment, our focus is to address the issue and restore the customer to the position they would have been in had the service failure not occurred. In most cases, this will be achieved by undertaking actions to put the service failure right and/or apologising, detailing lessons learnt.</p>	
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	<p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>3.2 Any remedy offered and will reflect the impact on the resident, focusing on putting things right, for example fixing an outstanding repair and apologising for a</p>	

			delay and acknowledging any shortfalls.	
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	<p>Square Roots staff are trained to seek an early resolution wherever possible.</p> <p>This is set out in Square Roots' Compensation & Redress policy sections 3, 7 and 9</p> <p>An amendment has been made to the Compensation & Redress Policy, so this point is more explicit. This will be completed by 7th March 2025</p>	
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	<p>Extract from Compensation and Redress policy:</p> <p>1.2 This document is based on the Housing Ombudsman's compensation guidance notes. We plan to revise the policy should the Housing Ombudsman's guidance, or legislation changes.</p>	

Section 8: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<p>An annual report will be produced to cover the issues required in this section. This report will be presented to the Board with oversight provided by the Member Responsible for Complaints.</p> <p>The report, the Board's response and the self-assessment will be published on the website.</p>	

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	As per 8.1.To be completed once reviewed completed by governing body	
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	Square Roots have received training on this. This type of event has not occurred. Policy will be updated to reference this by 7 th March 2025	
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	Square Roots have received training on this. This type of event has not occurred. Policy will be updated to reference this by 7 th March 2025	
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	Square Roots have received training on this. This type of event has not occurred. If Square Roots is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, we will notify the Ombudsman and provide information to our customers who may be affected and publish this on our website. We will	

			provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code	
--	--	--	---	--

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.		<p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>3.1 Where something has gone wrong will acknowledge this and set out actions we have taken or intend to take to put it right. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 financial remedy • Changing policies, procedures, or practices. 	It is recognised that Square Roots is a new organisation and that the service will continue to develop and change as more complaint data is received.
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	Yes	Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:	It is recognised that Square Roots is a new organisation and that the service will continue to develop and

	<p>intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.</p>		<p>1.2 Our aim will always be to resolve complaints as quickly as possible by taking an open, accountable and outcome focused approach.</p> <p>1.3 We recognise that complaints represent an opportunity to rebuild trust with our customers as well as providing us with opportunities to learn and make service improvements. The Executive Team reviews complaints and their responses to ensure they meet the requirements of the policy.</p> <p>10.1 All complaint responses will be subject to review by the Customer Services Team, who will ensure that potential opportunities for improvement are identified. Service Managers are responsible for developing and implementing improvement work discovered during a complaint investigation.</p>	<p>change as more complaint data is received.</p>
--	--	--	--	---

			12.1 All staff across the organisation are responsible for the implementation of this policy, and implementing lessons learnt	
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	<p>Lessons learnt publicised in Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report</p> <p>Extract from Complaints and Compliments policy:</p> <p>1.3 We recognise that complaints represent an opportunity to rebuild trust with our customers as well as providing us with opportunities to learn and make service improvements. The Executive Team reviews complaints and their responses to ensure they meet the requirements of the policy.</p> <p>10.1 All complaint responses will be subject to review by the Customer Services Team, who will ensure that potential opportunities for improvement are identified. Service Managers are responsible for developing</p>	Complaint data is also shared with Square Roots' Customer Community Committee, which is a committee formed on each development to feedback and input on our services.

			and implementing improvement work discovered during a complaint investigation.	
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	Head of Compliance & Customer Services	
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	The Board has an MRC in place who is a Non-Executive Member of the Board.	
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	Square Roots are complying the MRC is provided with monthly complaint reporting on numbers and response times	
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:	Yes	Quarterly reporting setting out number of complaints and responses outside of target time.	

	<p>a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;</p> <p>b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;</p> <p>c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman’s investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and</p> <p>d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.</p>			
9.8	<p>Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:</p> <p>a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</p> <p>b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and</p> <p>c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.</p>	No		<p>This was not in place for 2024. However, Square Roots is currently reviewing objectives for 2025 (the new financial year) and will implement objective/s that meet these criteria. This will be completed by 7th March 2025.</p>

