

Cover Report

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides headline data related to complaints and enquiries to the Council during 2019/20.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Panel is recommended to: -

1. note the trends and related commentary with regards to complaints and enquiries managed during 2019/20

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This report is in accordance with the Scrutiny Panel's remit in monitoring the Complaints and Enquiries process.

4. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & CORPORATE RESOURCES

- 4.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from this report. The cost of staff dealing with complaints across the Council is met from within the relevant revenue budgets, as are any compensation payments made. The cost of complaints monitoring is met within the approved revenue budget of the Business Analysis and Complaints Team (BACT).

- 4.2 Such costs, however, can be minimised by ensuring that complaints are dealt with successfully at the first stage, thus reducing the numbers that proceed to later stages.

5. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 5.1 Section 3.3 of the Council's constitution outlines the terms of reference for the Scrutiny Panel. This report recommends that the panel note the trends and related commentary with regards to complaints and enquiries managed during 2019/20. It is a function as set out within the constitution that the panel coordinate and oversee the scrutiny function of the Council. This can involve considering policy development, review and examining issues of concern to local people. This report provides an overview of the level of complaints and enquiries received relating to a range of Council services together with Member and Mayor and Cabinet enquiries. It is informative in nature and assists the panel in giving consideration to how the Council engages and supports its wider community.

There are no direct legal implications arising from the contents of this report.

APPENDICES

1 – Complaints and Enquiries Annual Report 2019/20

2 – Housing Service Self-assessment against Housing Ombudsman Service Code - September 2020

BACKGROUND PAPERS

In accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act, 1972 - Access to Information a list of Background Papers used in the preparation of reports is required.

Description of document	Location	Date

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Appendix 1

Complaints and Enquiries Annual Report 2019-20

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the Complaints & Enquiries received in 2019/20 with a focus on volume and performance in managing and learning from them.

2. Volumes and Performance

- 2.1 Further detail on volumes of complaints and enquiries received in 2019/20, the way they are managed and the intelligence they provide are set out in this report. In summary, 2019/20 saw the number of stage 1 complaints fall 14% (2701 to 2322) compared to the previous year.
- 2.2 Although the top level number of complaints has fallen, there are some variances within services that have seen some increases and some reductions - para 3.7 below sets out which services. The volume of Reviews (second stage) has not changed significantly (160 compared to 161 in 2018/19). There has been an 11% decrease (1847 from 2077) in the number of Members Enquiries compared to 2018/19 levels when local elections were held. In the two areas with statutory complaints procedures, volumes of complaints have increased by 2% in Adult Social Care (84 to 86) and increased by 19% (94 to 116) in Children's Social Care. There has been a 2% rise (1,859 to 1,904) in the number of Mayor & Cabinet Enquiries.
- 2.3 160 of 2322 stage 1 complaints went on to stage 2 giving an escalation rate of 7% (up from 6% in 2018/19). The number of Reviews escalating to become formal investigations by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS), at 39, is significantly lower than the 61 in the previous year and equates to around 24% (38% in 2018/19) of cases exhausting the Council's complaints process.
- 2.4 Of the 39 formal investigations undertaken by both the LGSCO and HOS, 18 (46%) were upheld, down from 63% last year. It should be noted that at the conclusion of the Council's investigation of a complaint there is either fault found or not. Regardless of whether fault is found or not, complainants can, and often do, still take their concerns to the Ombudsman. As such, in some of the cases where the Ombudsman upholds a complaint it may be the case that they are mirroring the Council's earlier decision in finding fault. The remedy imposed by the Ombudsman, financial or action, could though differ from that offered by the Council.

3. Complaints and Enquiries Data Analysis (2019/2020)

3.1 The number of complaints received by the Council in 2019/20 fell by 14% compared to the previous year. The number of Members Enquiries have decreased by 11% in 2019/20 and Mayor & Cabinet Enquiry volumes rose by 2%.

3.2 Whilst any complaint received means the Council have, in the opinion of our residents, failed to provide an acceptable service, the numbers of complaints and those which are escalated should be viewed in the context of the size of the borough, the number of transactions and the complexity/nature of those transactions. Hackney has a population of 281,120 living in c120,000 households. Relevant to the areas with the highest volume of complaints we are the landlord for 21,819 homes and have an additional 9,437 leaseholders/freeholders, have more than 37,413 residents claiming almost £300m of benefits, with 152,654 changes in circumstances assessed per annum and issue more than 152,000 parking penalty charge notices.

Type	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Resolution Stage	2,649	3,005	2,967	2,701	2,322
Review Stage	132	130	153	161	160
Members Enquiries	1,632	1,676	1,908	2,077	1,847
Mayor & Cabinet Enquiries	1,614	1,775	1,900	1,859	1,904

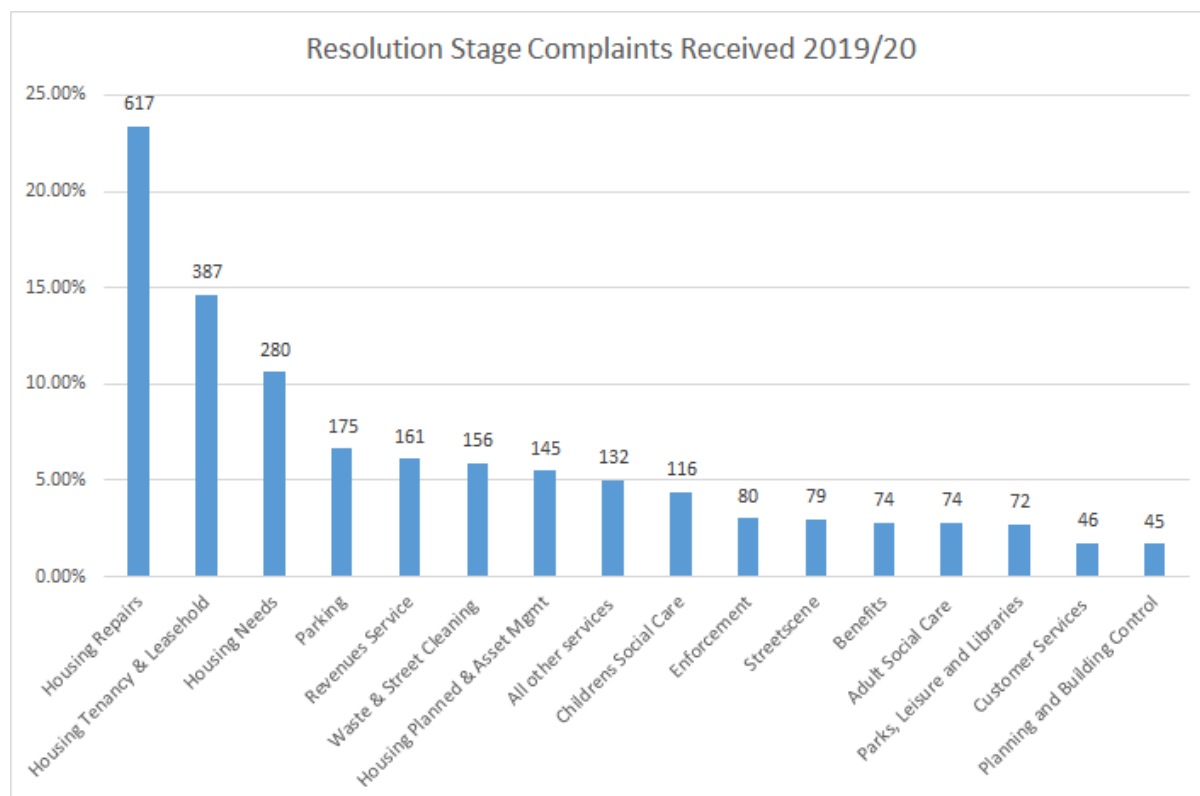
Average Response Times	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Resolution Stage Complaints	21.2 working days	20.6 working days	17.7 working days	20.9 working days	19.7 working days
Review Stage Complaints	20 working days	19.5 working days	18.9 working days	20.2 working days	20.2 working days

3.3 Volumes of Resolution (stage 1) complaints have fallen for the third consecutive year. There was also a decrease of 1.2 days in the average time taken to respond. We do not set a rigid response standard, but do aim to respond on average within 15 working days, recognising some cases are more complex and will take longer to resolve.

3.4 There were 160 Reviews (stage 2) in 2019/20, an increase of one case compared to the year before. 40% of Reviews reach an additional form of resolution compared to stage 1. The majority distributed across the following services – Housing Tenancy & Leasehold 48, Housing Building Maintenance 35, Benefits/Housing Needs 27, Parking 16 and Planned & Asset Management 13.

3.5 Types of Complaints

3.6 The chart below sets out the services in the Council that receive the highest volumes of first stage complaints. It is based on 2,639 cases (higher than the 2322 reported earlier in this report) as it includes Adult Social Care and Children's Act complaints as well as complaints that are allocated to more than one service.



3.7 Other than the increases in Children's Services and Housing repairs, the 14% reduction in complaints in 2019/20 is reflected by decreases across all of the higher generating services.

Less complaints:

- Parking – down 41% (299 to 175)
- Streetscene – down 41% (133 to 79)
- Customer Services – down 36% (72 to 46)
- Planned & Asset Management – down 29% (203 to 145)
- Benefits – down 24% (97 to 74)
- Parks, Leisure, Libraries – down 23% (95 to 72)
- Housing Needs – down 18% (343 to 280)
- Planning & Building Control – down 17% (54 to 45)
- Waste & Street/Estate Cleansing – down 13% (179 to 156)
- Adult Social Care – down 12% (84 to 74)
- Enforcement – down 10% (89 to 80)
- Revenues – down 7% (173 to 161)
- Housing Tenancy & Leasehold – down 5% (407 to 387)

More complaints:

- Housing Repairs – up 1.5% (608 to 617)
- Children’s Services– up 19% (94 to 116)

3.8 Almost all main services saw complaint volumes reduced this year compared to 2018/19. Parking, Housing Needs, Planned & Asset Management and Streetscene have seen the greatest reduction in actual numbers compared to 2018/19. 13% of Streetscene complaints related to new traffic schemes, a reduction on the 44% recorded in 2018/19.

3.9 2019/20 is the third consecutive year of overall complaint numbers falling with a 23% reduction since 2016/17.

3.10 The current system set-up means that non-mandatory fields are not always completed on the Pentana Complaints Software system at Resolution stage meaning that only 46% identify the ‘complaint type’. This will change from late 2020 with the introduction of the new OneCase IT system for complaints. Where ‘complaint type’ has been identified, it shows that people are complaining about service failure (25%), delays/missed appointments (14%), staff behaviour (13%), case management (11%), disagreement with policy/decision (8%) and financial dispute (6%).

Ombudsman Complaints

3.11 Following conclusion of the Council’s process, a complainant can approach one of two Ombudsman to ask for their case to be reviewed - the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LG&SCO) or the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS). In addition, those making a landlord related housing complaint can ask a Designated Person, Cllr McKenzie in our case, to decide whether he can help in reaching resolution of the issue without the need for the Housing Ombudsman to be involved.

3.12 The LG&SCO has published their Annual Report for 2019/20 and report that they undertook 26 formal investigations in Hackney last year of which 15 (58%) were upheld. The rate of upheld cases has fallen from 70% in 2018/19 and the number of cases has fallen from 30. The LG&SCO have provided detail on the 15 upheld cases which are broken down as follows – 5 x Housing (down from 6 last year), 4 x Education & Children (down from 5 last year), 3 x Adult Social Care (up from 2 last year), 1 x Planning & Development (same as last year), 1 x Highways & Transport (down from 4 last year) and 1 x Corporate & others (none last year). The LG&SCO imposed an additional £11,500 compensation in addition to that offered by the Council across the 15 upheld cases. These figures compare favourably to peer authorities in London as set out in the table below.

3.13 As reported in last year’s report, it should be noted that in April 2019 the Council, as expected, were issued with two ‘Public Reports’ by the LG&SCO relating to investigations in 2017/18. Both ‘Reports’ relate to complaints against Hackney Learning Trust (HLT) in relation to Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) provision. These follow one Public Report regarding Adult Social Care issued in 2016/17 and one regarding Planning Enforcement in 2015/16, which was the first the Council had received since 2007 bringing our total in the last 13 years to four. The table below sets out benchmarking data from neighbouring boroughs based on 2019/20 reports

published by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman on all local authorities and shows how Hackney compares.

Council	Complaints received	Detailed Investigations	Upheld (rate)	Public Reports (last 5 years)
Hackney	116	26	15 (58%)	4
Haringey	n/a	41	33 (80%)	6
Islington	n/a	24	17 (71%)	2
Newham	n/a	34	22 (65%)	0
Tower Hamlets	n/a	24	16 (67%)	2
Waltham Forest	n/a	29	20 (69%)	0

3.14 There were 14 housing related cases where the complainant formally asked for Designated Person assistance in resolving matters following the conclusion of the Council's formal complaints process. This is a significant increase on the 8 cases in 2018/19. In all cases, the Designated Person determined that there was no more to be added to the resolution already offered, allowing the complainant to approach the Housing Ombudsman if they wished to.

3.15 The Housing Ombudsman does not publish an annual letter or report and given their delays, often in the region of many months, in dealing with cases and catching up on backlogs makes year on year comparison difficult. However, we had 17 formal investigations by them in 2019/20 which is a significant decrease on the 29 in the previous year. All 17 cases investigated have been determined of which one was determined to be out of jurisdiction, 13 found no maladministration and three found service failure. There were no cases of maladministration in 2019/20 which compares favourably to the nine cases in 2018/19. The three cases finding service failure relate to delays in undertaking and concluding repairs (two) and failures in complaint handling (one).

3.16 On 7th July 2020, the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) published its new Code and Scheme. The amended provisions came into force on 1st September 2020. As members of the HOS Scheme Hackney Housing Services are compelled to comply with these expectations from this date. Landlords are now expected to carry out a self-assessment of their services against the Code annually (or when instructed by the HOS), with the deadline for completing the initial self-assessment set at 31st December 2020. This self-assessment must be published and made available to the public and the outcome reported to the executive. The current draft of the Self-Assessment is available in Appendix 2.

The key amendments and additions to the Code and Scheme are:

- establish and maintain a complaints procedure in accordance with any good practice recommended by the Ombudsman (member's revised policy and procedures must be in place by 31st March 2020);
- introduction of a revised definition of a complaint that effectively means that a complaint can be made in any manner, and specifies that member organisations are ultimately responsible for complaints made against any person or organisation providing services on their behalf;

- members to publish complaints procedure and make information about it easily accessible on websites and in correspondence with residents;
- default expected response time to Stage One (Resolution Stage) Complaints reduced from an average of 15 working days to 10 working days, and members must manage complaints in accordance with their published procedure or where this is not possible within a reasonable timescale;
- that the widest range of access routes for complaints is available, including social media;
- that complaint handling performance is reported on within the Annual Report, and;
- that mechanisms be put in place to ensure lessons are learnt from complaints that improve services and that evidence of this is shared with residents and governing bodies.

New Powers

Crucially, the Scheme also introduces new powers for the HOS to carry out wider investigations where there is evidence of recurring themes in cases referred to the Ombudsman suggesting ‘a systemic failing’ emanating from specific areas of an organisation’s service, and where investigations result in a finding of maladministration. In such cases, the Ombudsman may also make referrals to regulatory bodies. Furthermore, the HOS now has the power to issue ‘Complaint Handling Failure Orders’ on any member organisation that doesn’t comply with the Scheme, Code, or any orders the Ombudsman makes. Complaint Handling Failure Orders for non-compliance will be issued by HOS from January 2021.

Hackney Housing Service Response

Hackney Housing Service undertook an in depth review of its housing complaint handling performance and procedures in May 2020. The Review Report and the Housing Services Management Team (HSMT) decision to adopt its recommendations were informed by analysis of complaint trends, customer insights, and staff and stakeholder feedback that indicated that improvement can be made in the handling of complaints. A revised Housing Service Complaint Handling Procedure and the establishment of the Centralised Housing Complaints Team were both introduced on September 1st 2020 following approval from HSMT. A transition plan is in place to ensure effective practical implementation of the new ways of working over the coming months.

The above has meant that Hackney Housing Service is well placed to respond to the introduction of the new HOS Code and Scheme with the new time scales being the only key area that the review of the Housing Service complaints procedures had not preempted. The principal aim of the reviewed HOS Code is to introduce a standard among its members that promotes timely, effective remedies to complaints, improved accessibility, and quality customer service.

The new Hackney Housing Complaint Handling Procedures support these goals through the introduction of the ten day default time scale, a ‘Get it Sorted’ option for complaints that can be resolved within five days without the need for a full investigation with customer agreement, improved internal and external communication and

customer service promoted through initial personal contact with all complainants within two days, and dedicated, ongoing customer support provided by Senior Complaints Officers within the newly established Centralised Housing Complaints Team. As our attached draft self assessment illustrates we are either currently compliant or have plans in place to achieve compliance on all criteria and provide all required data ahead of the HOS deadlines.

Members' Enquiries

3.17 Members' Enquiries consist of a mixture of complaints, requests for service for residents and requests for information.

3.18 Average time taken to respond to Members Enquiries was 24 days in 2018/19, an increase of 6 days on the previous year despite an 11% decrease in volume compared to the year before as shown in the table below.

3.19 A breakdown of Members Enquiries by type where identified shows that they are used to raise service requests (75%), information requests (18%) and complaints (7%).

Members Enquiries	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Members Enquiries Received	1,632	1,676	1,908	2,077	1,847
Average time taken to respond	15 working days	15.5 working days	15.5 working days	18 working days	24 working days

Mayor and Cabinet Member Enquiries

3.20 Each Mayor and Cabinet Member's Enquiry represents a comprehensive, personal response sent from the Mayor or Cabinet member to what are often wide ranging and complex enquiries.

Mayor's & Cabinet Members Enquiries	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Enquiries received (inc referrals)	1,614	1,775	1,900	1,859	1,904
Average time taken to respond	13.9 working days	19.9 working days	26.8 working days	27.9 working days	36.2 working days

3.21 Responses from the Mayor and Cabinet are subject to extensive quality assurance by the Mayor & Cabinet Office and the Mayor or relevant Cabinet member before the response is sent, and drafts are returned to departments in cases where the resident's query has not been fully answered. Until a full response is obtained,

the case will not be concluded, and therefore this process puts significant pressure on response times.

3.22 The total number of enquiries received in 2019/20 has remained relatively consistent at 1,904 (a slight increase in the 1,859 cases received in 2018/19). While a focus on referring residents directly to service areas to negate an increase in volumes has continued, this unfortunately did not prevent an increase in response times to an average of 36.2 days.

3.23 The priority for Mayor and Cabinet casework continues to be resolving issues before responses are sent and ensuring a comprehensive and personal reply, and whilst this has meant that the quality of responses sent by the Mayor and Cabinet remains consistently high, this has had an ongoing impact on response times; the increasing complexity of cases raised with the Mayor and Cabinet, and ongoing demands on the Mayor and Cabinet Members' availability to sign-off responses, also has an impact.

3.24 It is anticipated that the current and ongoing review of casework processes and forthcoming move to a new Council-wide casework system will improve response times in the coming year. In the meantime, additional short term capacity and a move to an interim and fully paperless mode of working put in place to facilitate homeworking during the Covid-19 pandemic has already delivered a significant improvement to average response times; despite 926 cases being responded to in Q1 (almost 50% of the entire 2019/20 caseload), the average response time reduced significantly to 25.4 working days, meaning that it is now more in line with Member Enquiry response times.

Adults Social Care & Children' Social Care Complaints

3.25 Processes for dealing with complaints relating to the social care of both adults and children are set down in specific legislation meaning they are managed differently from complaints about all other Council services. Although they are held on the corporate complaints system and are managed in line with all other complaints if they escalate to the Ombudsman, the different stages, timeframes and the confidential nature of investigations means they are handled separately by officers in those services.

Adult Social Care Statutory Complaints

3.26 The table below shows the figures related to complaints covered by the statutory Adult Social Care (ASC) process.

Complaints	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Numbers Received	96	127	120	84	74
Average time taken to respond	33 working days	21 working days	28 working days	55 working days	35 working days

3.27. There has been a decrease in the volume of ASC cases compared to 2018/19. In addition, the average time taken to respond to complaints has also decreased significantly. It should be noted that there is no specific time limit for responding to ASC complaints. However, the service aim to resolve such complaints within 20 working days where possible. There are occasions, particularly where a complaint involves more than one team or has several strands to address, when cases take longer to investigate. Where more time is needed the complainant is made aware and kept updated throughout the process.

3.28 The complaints received in 2019/20 were raised in relation to:

- The standard of care delivered (20%)
- The outcome of an assessment or the care package implemented (16%)
- Communication (15%)
- Delays (15%)
- The standard of service delivered (non-care) (13%)
- ASC process (5%)
- Other i.e. finance/direct payments (16%)

3.29 In 2019/20, the LG&SCO have reported in their Annual Report that six Adult Care Services complaints were formally investigated of which three were upheld and three not upheld.

Children’s Social Care Complaints

3.30 The number of complaints reported on page five include all corporate complaints and Children’s Act complaints made about the service whereas the figures below exclude pre-stage complaints and corporate complaints. The number of Stage 1 Children’s Social Care complaints has decreased since the previous year however, proportionately the number of complaints escalating to stage three has increased.

Children’s Social Care Complaints	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Stage 1 Local Resolution	37	49	32	32	25
Stage 2 Investigation	8	9	10	9	8
Stage 3 Review Panel	2	2	1	5	6

3.31 In terms of the nature of complaints, issues relating to communication and staff conduct were the most common reasons for complaints. The majority of the complaints were in relation to the Family Intervention and Support Service (most in the Children in Need Service), which is the largest service area.

3.32 In 2019/20, the LG&SCO have reported in their Annual Report that 3 Children’s Social Care complaints were formally investigated, all of which were upheld.

Appendix 2

Housing Service Self-assessment against Housing Ombudsman Service Code - September 2020

1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No
	<p>Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint?</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>Hackney Housing Service Response:</p> <p>Definition adopted 1 September 2020 in new Housing Complaint Handling Procedure.</p>	✓	
	<p>Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?</p>	✓	
	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon</p> <p>Hackney Housing Services Response:</p> <p>Our exclusion policy aligns with Housing Ombudsman best practice advice.</p>	✓	
2	Accessibility		
	<p>Are multiple accessibility routes available to residents to make a complaint?</p> <p>Hackney Housing Service Response:</p> <p>Complaints can be made via online form, email, post, telephone, and in person to any member of staff. Social media accounts (Facebook & Twitter) are also available to raise issues.</p>	✓	
	<p>Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?</p> <p>Hackney Housing Services Response:</p>	✓	

	Updated procedure will be made publicly available on Hackney Council's website following HMT approval Sept 2020.		
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	✓	
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	✓	
3	Complaints team and process		
	<p>Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?</p> <p>Hackney Housing Services Response:</p> <p>Stage 1: 3 Senior Complaints Officers (SCOs) and 1 Complaints Manager within the Centralised Housing Complaints Team (CHCT).</p> <p>Stage 2: 4 Performance Officers, 1 Performance Analyst and the Head of Service, Corporate Business Intelligence & Member Services</p>	✓	
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	✓	
	<p>Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve complaints?</p> <p>Hackney Housing Services Note:</p> <p>Hackney Housing Complaint Handling Procedure includes a management escalation process. This ensures that where delays from Investigating Officers acknowledging and/or actioning their investigations is identified, a system of referral through the line management structure is implemented, and necessary timely action taken.</p>	✓	
	<p>If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?</p> <p>Hackney Housing Services Note:</p> <p>Hackney Housing Service's procedure doesn't employ a 3rd stage, in line with the best practice recommendation of the Housing Ombudsman Service.</p>	N/A	N/A
	Is any third stage optional for residents?	N/A	N/A

	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	✓	
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident? Hackney Housing Service Response: Record management will be further improved on adoption of the OneCase complaints management application (due Nov 2020) that allows all records to be kept in one place without the need for the use of a number of programmes.	✓	
	At what stage are most complaints resolved? Hackney Housing Service Response: Stage 1 - Resolution Stage. 2019/20: 92%		
4	Communication		
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process? Hackney Housing Service Response: The new procedure provides that SCOs (CHCT) make initial phone contact and maintain ongoing liaison with residents for the life of the complaint.	✓	
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision? Hackney Housing Service Response: The new procedure provides that the investigating officer discusses any proposed resolution with the SCO. The SCO then discusses this with the complainant before the final response is sent. This not only gives the complainant an opportunity to respond and challenge any area of dispute, but also affords a chance to review the response if it is felt that any dispute can be reconciled by doing so.	✓	
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within 5 days? Hackney Housing Service Note: Hackney Housing Service target is 48 hours or less.	✓	

	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	✓	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one? Hackney Housing Service Response: 2019/20: 92%		
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two? Hackney Housing Service Response: 2019/20: 8%		
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales? Hackney Housing Service Response (2019/20 figures reported align to the previous Code): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stage one: 54.84% ● Stage one (with extension): Unknown ● Stage two: 68.54% ● Stage two (with extension): Unknown <p>Note: It is not possible to provide statistics against the new Code at this time effective as of 01 September 2020. The deadline for submission and publication of this self assessment is 31/12/2020. Provisions have been made ensuring we report against new Code (including extensions) for 1 Quarter at that time and annually for future assessments.</p>		
	Where timescales have been extended did we give good reason? Hackney Housing Service Note: This is a central tenet of the new Hackney Housing Complaint Handling Procedure.	✓	
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed? Hackney Housing Service Note: This is a central tenet of the new Hackney Housing Complaint Handling Procedure.	✓	
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction?		

	<p>Hackney Housing service Response:</p> <p>Housing Complaints Customer Satisfaction Survey 2019/20:</p> <p>24.7% of respondents reported being fairly or very satisfied with the way the Council handled their complaint.</p> <p>The new Hackney Housing Complaint Handling Procedure will help to improve customer satisfaction via its focus on direct customer contact and support, timely and effective remedies, consistent corporate quality standards, and incorporating lessons learnt from complaints into the strategic management arena.</p> <p>Note: Questionnaire review under discussion to ensure survey questions align with those we must report on here.</p>		
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	✓	
	Where the timescale was extended, did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	N/A	
6	Fairness in complaint handling		
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	✓	
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	✓	
	<p>How many cases did we refuse to escalate? What was the reason for the refusal?</p> <p>Hackney Housing Service Response:</p> <p>No cases have been refused escalation. On occasion, escalation requests are referred back to the service to resolve minor outstanding issues which can be put right without need for escalation.</p> <p>The new procedures promise to pre-empt these through the early option to resolve complaints within 5 days, and the implementation of discussing the proposed resolution at Stage 1 with the complainant and to consider reviewing the final resolution if a reasonable alternative resolution can be agreed.</p>		
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	N/A	
7	Outcomes and remedies		

	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	✓	
8	Continuous learning and improvement		
	<p>What improvements have we made a result of learning from complaints?</p> <p>Hackney Housing Service Response:</p> <p>The new Housing Complaint Handling Procedure and the establishment of the CHCT (both September 2020) were a direct result of an in depth review of the previous complaint handling processes. The review and the HSMT decision to adopt its recommendations were informed by analysis of complaint trends, customer insights and staff and stakeholder feedback. This will lead to improved complaint handling including identifying, communicating, and acting strategically on lessons learnt from complaints.</p> <p>Mechanisms include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reviewed monthly performance report covering all elements of the complaints handling process with greater focus on quality assurance and the steps taken to address resident dissatisfaction with handling of complaints. ● Pentana dashboard provides both CHCT and Housing Service managers the ability to monitor complaints handling performance robustly. This dashboard provides live data on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) overall caseload volumes by service area and complaint/enquiry; (b) number of complaints/enquiries opened and closed within the last seven days; (c) number of complaints/enquiries closed each month; (d) workloads by individual CHCT officers. ● Quarterly reports presented to HSMT focus on lessons learnt for strategic use in improving performance. ● The Council is planning to introduce the new complaints management system (OneCase, November 2020). A similar performance management dashboard will be created. ● The new system has improved functionality in identifying complaint themes, monitoring progress in delivering follow up works, and capturing lessons learnt. 		
	<p>How do we share these lessons with:</p> <p>Hackney Housing Service Response:</p> <p>a) Residents?</p>		

	<p>Hackney Housing Service will publish information to residents relating to how we have learnt from complaints to improve services via the Hackney Housing Service Annual Report (published annually in October).</p> <p>Reports will also be provided to the soon to be reinstated Resident Scrutiny Panel for their consideration.</p> <p>b) The board/governing body?</p> <p>The Hackney Management Team (HMT) and Housing Services Management Team (HSMT) will also be presented with lessons learnt leading to service improvement within the Hackney Housing Service Annual Report.</p> <p>Lessons learnt from complaints in Housing will also be shared with the Scrutiny Committee (elected members) within the Corporate Complaints Report (October annually).</p> <p>c) In the Annual Report?</p> <p>Service improvements that have been informed through complaint lessons learnt mechanisms will be included within the Annual Report.</p>		
	<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</p>	<p>✓</p>	
	<p>What changes have we made?</p> <p>Hackney Housing Service Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reviewed and amended the Housing Services Complaint Handling Procedures and Policies. ● Adoption of the 10 day timescale for stage one complaint responses. ● Created new mechanisms to report on key data required by the new Code self assessment and to share and publish information relating to complaints with internal and external stakeholders and governance bodies. 		