

Housing

Ombudsman Service

The Complaint Handling Code 2024 and The Ombudsman's duty to monitor compliance

Verity Richards, Head of Service

The Housing Ombudsman Service

Our vision

Improving residents' lives and landlords' services through housing complaints

Our values

Fairness

We are independent and impartial; we take time to listen carefully and understand the evidence

Learning

We share knowledge and insights to maximise our impact and improve services.

Openness

We are accessible and accountable; we publish information on our performance & decisions

Excellence

We work together to provide an efficient high-quality service

Our membership

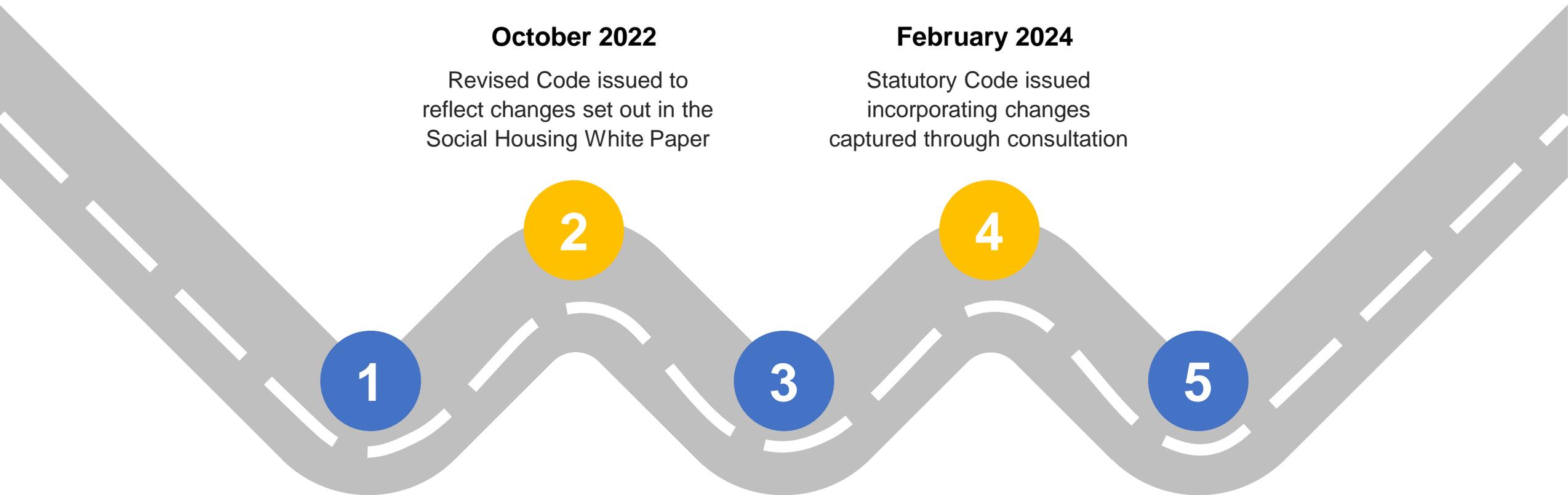
1,738 landlords
covering
4.9m households

1335 housing
associations

345 local
authorities

58 voluntary
members

The Code: the journey so far...



October 2022

Revised Code issued to reflect changes set out in the Social Housing White Paper

February 2024

Statutory Code issued incorporating changes captured through consultation

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July 2020

Complaint Handling Code first published by the Ombudsman

September 2023

Consultation undertaken to bring the Code into statute following changes set out in the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023

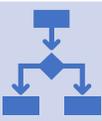
April 2024

Statutory Code came into force and the Ombudsman's duty to monitor compliance came into effect

The Code 2024: summary



Provisions of the Code are now be mandatory (these are a 'must')



Confirmation that there must be 2 stages to complaints procedures



Sets out timescales for stage 1 and stage 2, including acknowledgements and escalations



Clarification around timescales for responses and extensions at each stage



Clarifies the requirements for key roles, including complaints handlers and the MRC



Sets out how landlords must report and publish information about complaints

Self-assessments: key elements

Reflect and
review

Take effective
action

Gather and
document
evidence

Scrutinise and
challenge

Approve and
publish

Embed
changes

Self-assessments: key questions

? Are you satisfied that your policy and/or procedure meets the Code requirements?

? How do you assure that complaints are consistently handled in line with the Code?

? Do you have effective processes and systems in place to record and handle complaints?

? Will your reports help you identify key trends in the types of complaints made and their outcomes?

? Does your operational leadership team have sufficient information to monitor service provision?

? Are you reporting sufficient information to your Member Responsible for Complaints?

Annual report: key elements

Annual self-assessment including governing body's response

Analysis of complaints performance

Any findings of non-compliance

Service improvements made

*HOS annual report on the landlord

*Any other relevant reports by HOS

Reports: food for thought



Does the report include all key elements required by the Code?



Is any data included accurate, reliable and repeatable?



Are there any opportunities to benchmark with other landlords (quantitative / qualitative)?



Have you set out clearly how complaints have informed service improvements or change?



Are there successes or challenges in complaint handling residents should be aware of?



How could you include the residents' voice in your report?

Guidance and support available



Complaint Handling Code Guidance, FAQs and key topic information



Guidance for Governing Bodies and Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)



The Ombudsman's Spotlight Reports



Complaint Handling Failure Order Reports (quarterly)



The Ombudsman's Learning Reports



Duty to Monitor Team – compliance@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

The duty to monitor compliance

Our aim

To extend fairness through embedding a consistently positive complaint handling culture

Our objectives

Raise awareness
and accessibility of
complaints
processes

Increase
consistency in
complaint handling

Identify and
maximise learning

Widen our offering
to landlords to
support excellent
complaint handling

Our activities

Monitor
compliance policy
with the Code

Monitor
compliance in
practice with the
Code

Continuously
explore activities
undertaken by
landlords and share

To develop our
website offering,
and channels to
support landlords

Code compliance: monitoring

Submissions

- Have landlords provided submissions to the Ombudsman in timescale?
- Are submissions complete in line with the requirements of the Code?

Policy

- Has the landlord self-reported any instance of non-compliance?
- Where there is non-compliance, are these reasonable?
- Does the landlord's policy comply with the Code?

Practice

- Is the landlord applying its policy consistently and fairly in practice?
- Is a positive complaint handling culture embedded across the landlord?

Code compliance: interventions

Notify and request
action to resolve
issues

Conduct
assessments and
engage

Signpost to best
practice or
guidance

Conduct
investigations and
issue findings

Issue Complaint
Handling Failure
Orders

Publish Failure
Orders and refer
to regulatory
bodies

Code compliance: sharing learning

Continue to run and promote our Code Webinars

Develop and publish training on the Code and complaint handling

Increase our offering through key topics via our Centre for Learning

Widen our engagement activities with landlords and residents

Publish learning reports and findings from duty to monitor activities

Work with other stakeholders to increase support available to the sector

Keeping in touch



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www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Questions