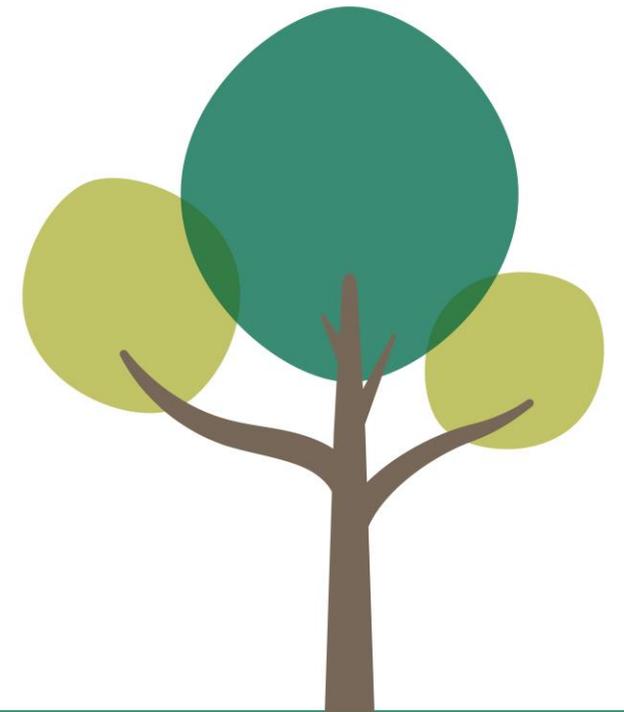
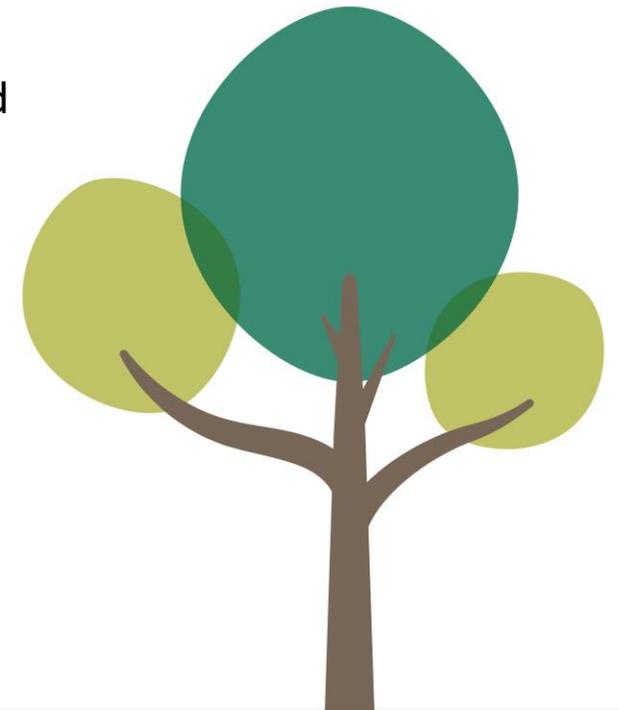


# Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code



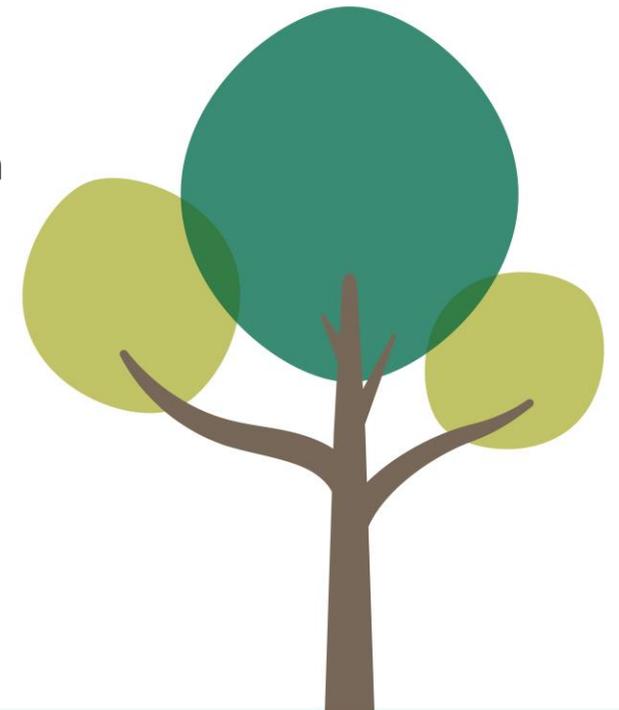
## What is the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code?

- Provides the future framework for complaint handling by Local authorities and social landlords
- Aims to introduce greater consistency across landlords' complaint procedures
- Intended to create a 'resident-focused process'
- Easier for tenants to make complaints about their landlords
- Landlords will be asked to self-assess against the code by 31 December 2020 and publish the results
- Non-compliance could result in the Ombudsman issuing complaint handling failure orders



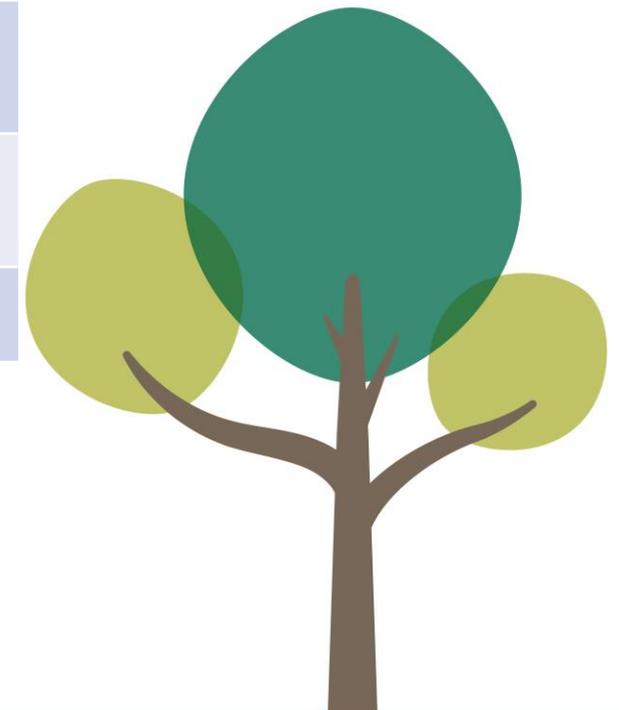
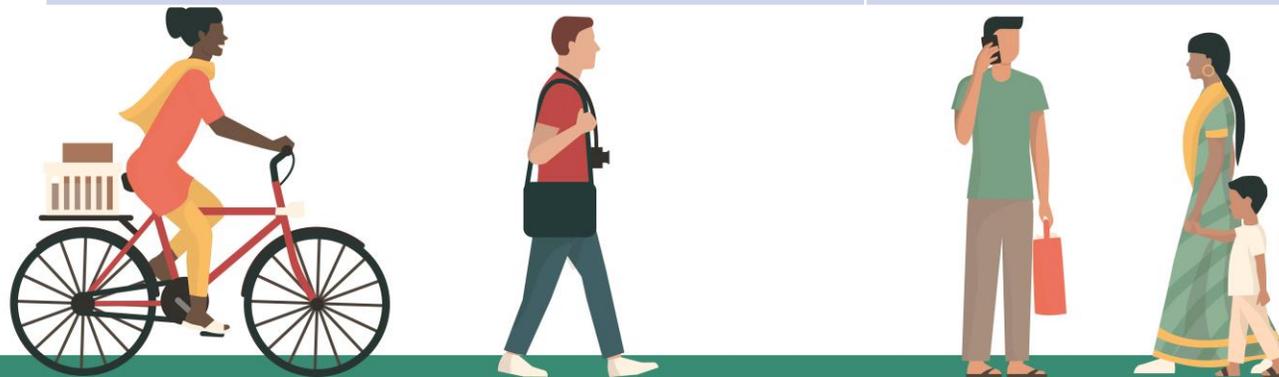
## The Complaint Handling Code – Key points

- Universal definition of a complaint
- Requirement to improve access for residents
- Ensuring residents are aware of the complaint procedure, the Code, and their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS)
- Fairness in complaint handling with a resident-focused process
- Taking action to put things right and appropriate remedies
- Creating a positive complaint handling culture
- Continuous learning and improvement – demonstrate learning with evidence in Annual Reports



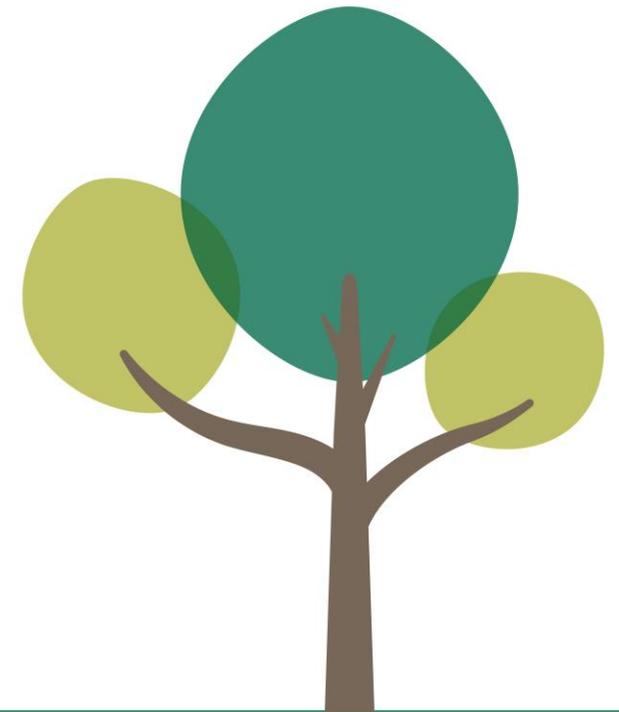
What we have done so far to implement the code for Sandwell MBC:

Initial self-assessment	Work already done
No visibility of complaint definition	Set up working group and hosted virtual meetings with Sandwell Community Information Participation service (SCIPS) to get residents feedback and ideas
Unable to see exclusions policy online	New customer feedback procedure written and awaiting approval. All information and links in one easy accessible webpage
No information available for when complaints are resolved	Introduced a new Housing Dashboard for resolution times, stages of complaints and compliments received
How satisfied are our residents when complaints are resolved	New customer feedback process to be implemented from January. Survey results to be published. New complaints system in 2021 would aid this process.
What improvements have we made as a result of lessons learnt	Working with Service Manager on a 'lessons learnt' project



What needs to be done by end of December 2020:

1. Report outcome of Self-assessment to board
2. Self Assessment needs to be approved
3. Update any policies and procedures (deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 for this)
4. Approval for web page
5. Self Assessment needs to be published on website by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020
6. Housing Dashboard needs to be approved and published.
7. Lessons learnt process needs to be agreed



## Moving forward into 2021:

- The Housing Code has made us look at the complaints process for the Council as a whole rather than just housing
- As a consequence of looking at housing complaints new webpage designed for easier accessibility, however no policies or procedures needed to be changed at present.
- Consulted with colleagues in Adults and Children's Trust on new information webpage
- Looking at complaints for Housing has made Customer Feedback Team look at producing dashboards for other service areas
- Moving from two feedback systems to one will improve efficiencies and customer experience and give better management information.

