



Finance, Resources, Audit and Governance Committee
24 January 2025

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report – Housing Ombudsman

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Portfolio: Housing and Communities

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of the Report:

To present the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report for a response to be recorded by the Committee and to then present the document to the Housing Ombudsman and upload to the Council's website.

Recommendations:

- For the Committee to take note of the performance report within appendix 1 and its submission to the Housing Ombudsman'

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the Council's Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report to comply with the Housing Ombudsman's reporting requirements.

2. Background

- 2.1 To detail the councils performance from when the Council became an RP and covers from 01/10/2023 to 31/03/2024. Before submission can occur the performance report must be considered by the relevant oversight board.
- 2.2 Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. The organisation must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to the relevant stakeholders.
- 2.3 The organisation 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. This has been identified as being the Customer Experience and Insight Lead.
- 2.4 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').

3. Proposed action

- For committee to review the performance presented in appendix 1 and permit its submission to the ombudsman

4. Other options

- 4.1 No response given – The council may choose not to give a response to the report however as a report is required this will be in breach of the Housing Ombudsman's Code. There therefore is no other option.

5. Issues and risks

- 5.1 **Resource Implications** – there are no resource implications associated with this report
- 5.2 **Legal Implications** The committee has been named as the performance oversight board within the Councils role as an registered provider. By providing the attached performance report we are meeting the expectations of the ombudsman.
- 5.3 **Equality Implications** – Equalities implications have been reviewed with consideration given to:

- The number of complaints received is 0.
- The 2024-25 action plan
- The EqCIA completed on 15 April 2024 relating to the Council's Housing and Homelessness Policies.

The action plan aims to provide continuous improvements, such as taking an individually considered approach to reduce rent arrears and debt recovery and ensuring contractors maintain high levels of performance. The measures outlined will have either a positive or neutral impact for all households but officers are aware that of the protected characteristics, households of those who are:

- female headed households
- young people including care leavers,
- people with health issues, including mental health and/or disabilities,
- single males
- people fleeing domestic abuse,
- people who are LGBTQ+
- Those granted refugee status or Ukraine visa scheme holders

May be more likely to be placed in temporary accommodation. Therefore while they may be more likely to be impacted, the outcome will be more positive as they are in receipt of the measures.

5.4 **Environmental Impact** – there are no environmental impact implications associated with this report

5.5 **Crime and Disorder** – there are no crime and disorder implications associated with this report.

5.6 **Risks** – the appended report has considered all risks

6. **Conclusion**

6.1 To ensure that the Council complies with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code this report should be presented and responded to by the Finance, Resources Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

7. **Recommendations**

7.1 For the Committee to take note of the performance report within appendix 1 and its submission to the Housing Ombudsman'



Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 01/10/2023 – 31/03/2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report sets out the councils performance within our role as a Registered Provider. It provides an account from 01/10/2023 to 31/03/2024 in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.
- 1.2. The Councils priority remains to keep tenants and colleagues safe whilst accommodated in our owned properties. Compliance with statutory regulations is therefore essential.
- 1.3. Officers continue to see strong performance in all areas of property compliance and our properties comply with the Decent Homes Standard.
- 1.4. The Housing Ombudsman is responsible for investigating complaints about social housing providers and in April 2024, introduced a new complaint handling code to ensure complaints are addressed fairly, effectively, and promptly. The report includes our self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code.

2. Annual Self-Assessment

- 2.1. Officers completed a self-assessment (June 2024) against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. This approach allowed the council to align our policies and practices to provide a prompt and effective complaints service.
- 2.2. Our full self-assessment is published online and can be found here - [RP Complaints performance 2024](#)
- 2.3. Officers are continually seeking to improve our performance and our monitoring of compliance. The Complaint Handling Code is another important tool to ensure that we are doing so.

3. Performance

- 3.1. Overall, we received 0 complaints about the owned interim and temporary accommodation between 01/10/2023 and 31/03/2024. We therefore do not have any statistics to report regarding Stage 1 and Stage 2 responses for this period.

- 3.2. However, we are fully aware of how The Housing Ombudsman and the Regulator of Social Housing both regard effective complaints handling and listening to tenants as important, and we embrace a positive complaints culture as this is key to enhancing and improving our services.

4. **Learning and Service Improvement**

- 4.1. Although this small portion of the year shows that we didn't receive any actual complaints we are always striving to improve.
- 4.2. With this in mind, the Housing team will be looking at rent arrears and how this process can be more aligned with taking into account known personal circumstances when pursuing a debt after a tenancy has ended. We are reviewing our aged debt recovery processes to work in partnership with our Help Hub so that debt advice can be used as a tool to make this process more compatible with customers circumstances.
- 4.3. All customers placed into interim or temporary accommodation are allocated a specific support worker (Housing & Benefits Advisor) so that they can be supported. This makes sure that the correct benefits are applied for and the rent is paid to avoid putting their tenure in the TA at risk.
- 4.4. We meet regularly with our repairs contractors to monitor performance and ensure that they adhere to the standards and codes of conduct expected of them.

Key Performance Indicators

Homes that do not match the Decent Homes Standard	0%
Gas Safety Checks	100%
Fire Safety Checks (FRA's)	100%
Asbestos Safety Checks	100%
Water/Legionella Safety Checks	100%
Electrical Testing (5 years)	100%
ECP Ratings lower than C	0
Housing Health & Safety Rating System Category 1 Failure	0

2024 – 2025 Action Plan

Action to be Taken	By Whom	By When
Introduce a standard objective in relation to the expectations for complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties.	Head of Housing & Benefits	31/03/2025
Work with colleagues, data and tenants to continuously improve service quality.	Head of Housing & Benefits	Ongoing

Ensure all communications are accessible to all tenants.	Housing & Benefits Team	Ongoing but we have ensured that accessibility is a priority through training our team and have partnered with Intran for translation services.
Develop our service delivery method so that it delivers a positive tenant experience.	Housing & Benefits Manager (Temporary Accommodation)	Ongoing but through training and empowering of the TA team this is proving positive as seen in the results we are experiencing.
Completion of TSM's	Housing & Benefits Manager (Temporary Accommodation)	January 2025