
Housing Ombudsman Self-Assessment Complaint Handling

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Bill Hartnett
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Judith Willis
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Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	
Relevant Council Priority	Community & Housing
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee RESOLVE that:-

- 1) The Housing Complaint Self-Assessment (Appendix 1) is approved;**
- 2) Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024-25 (Appendix 2) is approved;**
- 3) The Housing Complaints Standard (Appendix 3) is approved and;**

The Executive Committee is asked to NOTE that

- 4) The reports referred to at resolutions 1 to 3 above, will be published to the Council's website.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Housing Ombudsman is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Its role is to resolve disputes involving members of the Housing Ombudsman Service, including making awards of compensation or other remedies when appropriate
- 2.2 All Local Authorities that are Registered providers of Social Housing are required to be a member of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. A condition of the scheme is that members must have a complaint

handling procedure which must satisfy the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code which became mandatory from April 2024.

- 2.3 The Housing Service must also report on performance and provide information on continuous improvement as a result of learning from complaints.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Complaint Self-Assessment

- 3.1 The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024 requires at section 8.1 that members undertake a self-assessment of its complaint handling scheme as part of its annual complaint performance and service improvement report.
- 3.2 The purpose of the self-assessment is to set out how landlords demonstrate their complaint handling complies with the provisions of the Code.
- 3.3 Completion of the self-assessment typically requires landlords to:
- Review current practices to identify any gaps or actions required to comply
 - Take any necessary action to ensure that Code requirements are met
 - Gather and document evidence to support the assessment of compliance
 - Scrutinise and challenge the assessment, to provide assurance
 - Publish the self-assessment and wider documentation
 - Communicate and embed changes made through the self-assessment
- 3.4 The self-assessment has been completed by officers and has been reviewed by the Council Leadership Team and is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.5 On completing the self-assessment Officers identified that for Stage 2 complaints, the Housing Complaints Standard was not specific on reasons to refuse a stage 2 request and on occasion the decision not to accept an escalation was made for the wrong reasons.
- 3.6 The Housing Complaints Standard has been amended to improve the process and ensure this does not occur in the future. This has been

relayed to Officers through the Housing Department Management Team Meetings.

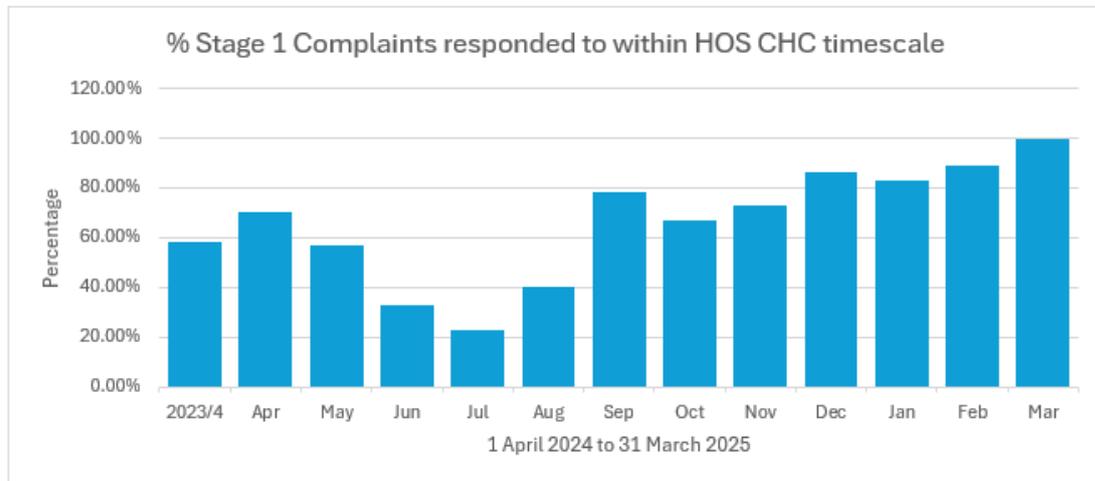
Annual complaints performance and service improvement report

- 3.7 The Housing Service is committed to providing an excellent service for its customers, but the Council recognises that the authority does not always get it right. The Council recognises that customers have a right to complain when they feel the authority has fallen short of their expectations.
- 3.8 As well as giving the Council the chance to put things right, complaints provide valuable feedback on the authority's services that help Officers to continually improve services by identifying root causes, learning from complaints, making improvements and developing a positive complaint culture.
- 3.9 The following tables provide statistics around quantity and types of complaints received, numbers closed and upheld, and the percentage responded within the timescale set out by the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code:

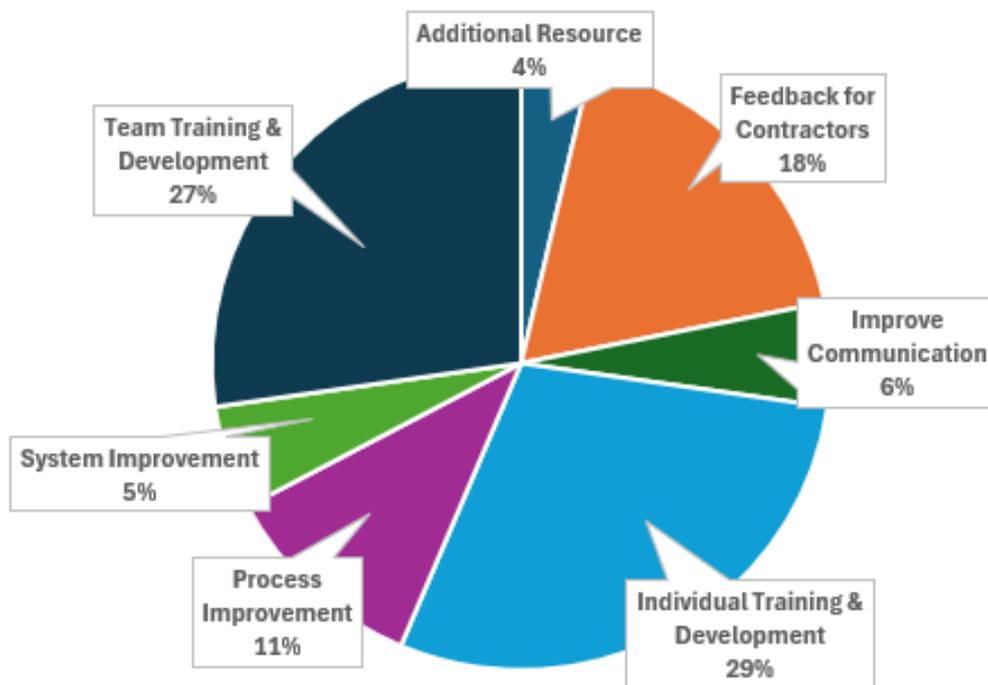
Complaints	Housing Services			Housing Property Services			Total
	N&T	V&A	Revenue	A&A	R&M	Capital	
Stage 1 Received	21	1	4	3	71	19	124
Stage 1 Closed	23	2	5	3	74	17	127
Stage 1 upheld/partially upheld	5	1	2	2	39	7	56
Stage 2 received	6	0	1	0	11	3	21
Ombudsman received	2	0	0	0	7	1	10

N&T = Neighbourhood & Tenancy A&A = Aids & Adaptations
V&A = Voids & Allocations R&M = Repairs & Maintenance

- 3.10 The graph below shows the percentage of complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman code requirements including the figures for 2023/24 for comparison. Due to the declining performance in the first quarter, a dedicated complaints investigator has been introduced in Housing Property Services from August 2025 to improve complaints handling performance.



3.11 Between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, 55 learning outcomes were recorded because of complaints that were fully and partially upheld, the learning types and number presented are as follows:



3.12 Between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025 the Council received three determinations where the Housing Ombudsman fully or partially upheld a complaint following an intervention.

3.13 The Housing Complaints Standard clearly sets out the complaint handling principles managers need to apply when investigating a

complaint. The standard also provides guidance for managers in how to set out their response to ensure all points are addressed and appropriate remedies are considered. Letter templates have been produced to ensure a consistent complaint response.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Compensation was paid to complainants in nine Stage 1 complaints totalling £1,795.21.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The annual report, self-assessment and service improvement plan is required under the statutory Complaint Handling Code as per the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 There are no implications from Local Government Reorganisation. Any new local authority will be required to follow the requirements of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 if it is a stock holding authority.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 The Housing Complaints Standard supports the Council's priority of Community and Housing ensuring that tenants live in well maintained homes and receive a quality housing service.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 There are no climate change implications from this report.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 The report is being designed in a more accessible format to ensure tenants can access and digest the details contained within it.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The Housing Service wants the complaint process to be easily accessible for residents and does not view complaints as a negative. It is important to know when things go wrong so that the authority can put

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10 June

them right and learn from mistakes. This approach enables the Council to continually improve what Officers do by identifying the root causes, learning from complaints, making improvements and developing a positive complaint culture.

7.2 Failure in following the Housing Ombudsman Code can lead to various consequences for landlords, including Complaint Handling Failure Orders (CHFOs) and potential reporting to the Regulator for Social Housing.

7.3 Complaints are a standing agenda item on the Housing Directorate Management Team meeting to ensure complaints are dealt with effectively and reported as required.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 - Housing Complaint Self-Assessment 2024/25

Appendix 2 - Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024-25

Appendix 3 - Housing Complaints Standard

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Bill Hartnett, Portfolio Holder for Housing	21/05/2025
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Judith Willis, Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services	.
Financial Services	Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer	22/05/2025
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor – Governance	19/05/2025