

Housing Division – Complaint Handling – 1st April 2024 – 31 March 2025 Annual Report

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Our policy and procedure for handling complaints is published on the Council's website. The Chief Executive's Service receives complaints, acknowledges them, tracks them and provides summary reports.
- 1.2 The published information tells customers that the Council is committed to providing positive housing services that meet our published standards and deliver good customer care. It encourages them to give feedback so that we know what is working well and what we need to do to improve.
- 1.3 The service is acting to encourage feedback and complaints to promote learning.

2 Quantity

- 1.4 During 2024/2025 the Housing Division responded to 60 complaints at Stage 1 of its complaints procedure. (there was a total of 37 in 2023/2025)

8 complaints were made at Stage 2. (there was a total of 3 last year.)

One complaint was referred to Ombudsman service.

During the same period the Housing Division received 74 compliments.

10 were for Housing Management and 64 were for Housing Maintenance.

- 1.5 38 of the Stage 1 complaints were about the maintenance service.

22 of the Stage 1 complaints were about the management service.

6 of the Stage 2 complaints was about the maintenance service – one was withdrawn because the complaint was resolved. One was not responded to within the Code timescale of 20 working days.

2 of the Stage 2 complaints were about the management service.

1 complaint was submitted to the Housing Ombudsman Service. They have yet to respond.

3 Content of Complaints

- 3.1 There were some commonalities in the complaints that were received about the maintenance service. Largely they are concerned with the time taken to

complete a job or lack of information about when it will be booked in. Some of this is linked with follow on work after a first visit.

The complaints received about the management service were individual. Two were about our approach to dealing with anti social behaviour reports. Some show an increasing concern about the length of time it is taking to rehouse applicants who are homeless.

Six were about how their housing register application was considered. In one case a concern was raised about not accepting a family member on the list but we were able to explain that the assessment had not been completed. In one case the applicant had visited the One Stop Shop without an appointment and could not be seen at the time they arrived. In two cases there was concern that some of the information provided had not been considered in the assessment undertaken. One applicant thought that they had been excluded because of the wording on the advert. One applicant was concerned about the length of time they were waiting for the vacancy they had been offered to become available.

Three complaints were about how tenancies had ended. One was concerned with a misunderstanding about the utility company for the vacancy, one was concerned with when the keys to the property were submitted and the end of tenancy date and one was concerned with a letter that had been sent about a debt at the end of a family member's tenancy.

In the Stage 2 complaints that have been responded to the reviewer upheld the findings of the officer responding at Stage 1. One was about a request to move home, the other was about the attitude of a member of staff and one wanted to be re-imbursed for their housing costs. In another the tenant was not satisfied that we had attended their repair safely.

4 Learning from Complaints

- 4.1 Whilst we can acknowledge and respond to complaints in a positive manner it is important that we learn from them so that we can improve our services. We can consider whether there are systemic issues in the way we deliver our services and also whether we can change our approach to service delivery.
- 4.2 Our key areas of consideration for 2025-2026 based on complaints received continue to be:
 - We must actively seek feedback from tenants and respond positively to what they tell us about our service.
 - All services should be delivered with good customer care.
 - We should have published standards, policies and procedures and ensure we act in accordance with what we have stated.
 - If a customer raises a concern with the service we should act promptly to address it and provide clear timescales for responding
 - We need to deliver reported repairs in the timescales agreed and when we cannot do so keep the tenant informed.

- We send a survey to all complainants following our reply to find out if they are satisfied with our response

4.3 There are some specific considerations in our learning and some which are more general.

4.4 Our learning actions will include:

The Council has changed the structure of the Maintenance Service so that it has better capacity to meet the needs of both the stock and its tenants. We are acting to embed the changes now so that tenants will have less cause to 'chase' the repairs they have requested because of delays. The team of tradesmen has been increased to deal with the demands of the service. We need to monitor the quality of workmanship and the attitude and quality of works provided by contractors. We will be able to report on transactional surveys to track the satisfaction, or otherwise, of tenants so that we can have a continual learning loop into systems of work.

We will publish a code of conduct for all of our contractors to follow.

Our actions to improve the service to respond to reports of anti social behaviour have been shared with the Housing Task and Finish Group. A new policy will be submitted to the Resources Board at its meeting in October. The new case management system approved by the Resources Board last financial year has been implemented. Clear recommendations have been made following an independent review of the service.