



PA Housing

**Annual Complaints
Performance and
Service Improvement Report
2023-2024**

Introduction

As a social housing provider, we must comply with the Housing Ombudsman's Statutory Complaint Handling Code (the "Code"). This Annual Report provides:

- 1) Analysis of our complaint handling performance.
- 2) Findings of non-compliance by the Housing Ombudsman (HoS).
- 3) Service improvements made because of the learning from complaints.
- 4) Actions following any other relevant reports or publications produced by the HoS in relation to the work of the landlord.
- 5) An overview of compensation paid.

We must also complete an annual self-assessment against the Code and publish both this report and the self-assessment on our website alongside the response to the Annual Report from our Governing Body, and our Complaints Policy.

1. Analysis of our complaint handling performance

- 1.1 In 2023/24, 2,037 complaints were received, an average of 170 complaints each month. This represented a decrease of 10% when compared to 2022/23.
- 1.2 Between 2021/22 and 2022/23, the volume of complaints received had risen by 58%.
- 1.3 Complaints responses issued on time reduced to a yearly average of 67% (versus a target of 90% and down on the previous year total of 87%).
- 1.4 The top 3 issues that led to a complaint were:
 - Responsive repairs
 - Gas servicing and breakdown
 - Service charges
- 1.5 In 2023/24, 72% of complaints were either upheld or partially upheld. This has decreased slightly from 77% in 2022/23.
- 1.6 We do not currently record complaints which were not accepted but, going forward, we will be. The Complaints Policy sets out clear circumstances when a complaint would be reasonably refused.

2 Findings of non-compliance by the Housing Ombudsman

- 2.1 During 2023/24, we received 48 determinations from the HoS: 13 more than the previous year. The majority of these cases related to before 2023, in some cases these go as far back as 2020. Five cases were deemed to be a severe maladministration.
- 2.2 Determinations are increasing year-on-year; 27% more than 2022/23 and 37% higher than 2021/22. The HoS national data for 2022/23 shows a 55% maladministration rate with severe cases rising year-on-year by 323%.
- 2.3 In 2023/24, 85% of determinations found full or partial maladministration with 5 severe cases. This is an increase from 77% in 2022/23, and 3 severe cases.
- 2 determinations were outside jurisdiction
 - 5 determinations were no maladministration
 - 9 determinations were partial maladministration
 - 23 determinations were maladministration
 - 5 determinations were severe maladministration
- 2.4 Of the determinations 41 included orders for us to carry out an activity and then provide evidence to the HoS of our actions.

3 Service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints

- 3.1 An escalation team was introduced in June 2023. This team intervene in significant service failures whether it falls into the complaints process or not.
- 3.2 Following on from investigations by the escalations team, specific service improvements were identified:
- Our Resident Assembly have reviewed and approved a new Reasonable Adjustments Vulnerability Strategy and Policy. These will be published on our website after they have been through our governance framework.
 - Process mapping the council tax and benefit entitlement implications and support we can offer for long-term decanted residents was done in September 2023.
 - Process mapping for a business wide policy management framework was completed in February 2024 to support managers with regular reviews and governance requirements.

- A programme of half-hour 'conversation sessions' for all colleagues began in October 2023 to support a shift in staff culture on topics such as empathy and record keeping.
- Set up regular complaints team meetings with our wider property services teams to ensure the correct accountability for complaint from February 2024
- Carried out a customer experience exercise in January 2024 with residents whose windows had been replaced to inform our wider strategic aim to improve the transition from responsive repairs to planned works.

3.3 Due to the high volume of repairs-related complaints, significant additional resource has been introduced to support with complex cases and try and prevent escalation.

3.4 Weekly reporting is reviewed by the relevant service teams. The overall position is also reviewed at management team meetings.

3.5 On initial receipt of a complaint, we now call the resident to acknowledge it, as well as discuss the situation to see if a quick resolution can be sought.

4 Actions following any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Housing Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord

4.1 A number of key actions have also been introduced:

- Internal reviews of severe maladministration cases are completed with lessons learnt and action logs being monitored by our Internal Audit team.
- Our Finance, Risk and Audit Committee, who report to our Board, now have oversight of the reports generated by the Internal Audit team.
- An external consultant was commissioned to carry out a wider review of our damp and mould processes.
- Training on complaints handling has been delivered to relevant colleagues.
- Regular training for all colleagues on accurate record keeping, good communication and engaging with residents has been introduced.
- A programme of self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Reports is being developed.
- A customer journey exercise on planned window replacement was completed to understand residents' experiences and inform improvement.
- A review of how equipment servicing compliance is monitored was actioned and improvements implemented to offer greater assurance.

5 Compensation

- 5.1 In total, we paid £394,745 in compensation to residents compared to £140,812 in 2022/23.
- 5.2 Of this, £50,014.91 was ordered to be paid by the HoS,(an average of £1,042 per case)

Self-Assessment against the revised Complaints Handling Code

In February 2024 the HoS published its revised Complaints Handling Code.

The self-assessment exercise highlighted:

- Several updates were needed to our Complaints Policy to ensure compliance with the Code. This has been completed.
- Complaint response times in 2023/24 were below target. This will be closely monitored throughout 2024/25.
- Revised guidance and processes for call handlers was needed. This has already taken place.
- Full compliance with the revised Code will help avoid maladministration findings on complaints handling and should increase customer confidence.