

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 empowered the Housing Ombudsman to issue a code of practice about the procedures members of the scheme should have in place for considering complaints. The Social Housing Regulation Bill 2024: The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, became statutory and was implemented on 1st April 2024, placing a statutory duty on housing providers to monitor compliance with the provisions of the Code. This involves the landlord undertaking a self-assessment against the Code Compliance Framework, (the Framework).

Sherburn House Charity is a small social housing provider that manages 30 properties for people aged 55+. The site also accommodates a 55 bed residential care home which often receives referrals from our housing residents when their needs increase.

The properties are situated in an historic Almshouse site dating back to the 12th Century. Social housing residents have licence agreements rather than Tenancy Agreements. We are located on a 15 acre conservation area and the properties are maintained to a high standard. A full refurbishment of the social housing provision was undertaken in 2021 and 2022, with grant funding support from Homes England.

Our experience in managing past complaints has shaped our current open door policy where residents are encouraged to report any issues before they become complaints, most of the issues we deal with are service requests.

We promote an open and inclusive site which encourages residents to raise issues before they escalate into complaints. Residents contact us by telephone, email or call into the office to discuss problems. They also have an opportunity to raise concerns at their quarterly residents meeting. We consider complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve the services we offer.

We have reviewed our complaints handling practice against the Ombudsman's Framework requirements and this report covers the following:

A). Production of an annual complaints performance and service improvement report, (this report), which includes the following:

An annual self-assessment against the Code to ensure Complaints Policy is in line with its requirements.

The self-assessment has been completed and our complaints policy is compliant with the Housing Ombudsman guidelines on best practice for dealing with complaints. The self - assessment is displayed on our website and areas for improvement are detailed below.

A qualitative and quantitative analysis of complaints received

Complaints Received from 1 st April 2023 -31 st March 2024	Number of Complaints L1	Number of Complaints L2	Number of Complaints not reaching formal procedure
Housing Residents	0	0	Not recorded: These will be recorded for the next reporting period

We had no housing complaints that reached formal complaints procedures in the previous 12 months. The Customer Satisfaction Survey Results 2023 concur with the high satisfaction levels of our customers which achieved a 68% return rate. Please see the survey results included with this paper.

Any findings of non-compliance with the Code

The Charity initially missed correspondence from the Housing Ombudsman regarding the new statutory requirement to review our service against the Complaint Handling Code, contact details have now been updated to improve communication channels. We also reviewed and amended our Complaints Policy and Compensation Policy in line with code requirements.

Service improvements made as a result of learning from complaints

As we manage a small number of properties, we are able to address residents' concerns promptly as our office is based on site. We have a small administrative team of four plus one Housing & Estates Coordinator and one Maintenance Assistant who are dedicated to manage planned and reactive repairs and maintenance.

As a small housing provider we have limited administrative resources but will review all internal housing policies and procedures to ensure they are aligned with the new Code, and any shortfalls will be in place for the next reporting period.

Action Plan for 2024-25

1. Refresher and additional training for complaint handlers
2. Website improved to make it more accessible for residents and provide an easily accessible Complaints Policy
3. Improved communication channels with Housing Ombudsman by having a named contact at the Charity
4. Ongoing review and improvement of policy and procedure to meet the statutory reporting requirements, including the collection of data which includes issues that do not make it to formal complaints procedure.

Actions following any recommendations from the Ombudsman and actions following any publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the Charity.

The Charity has no recommendations from the Ombudsman and no publications regarding the work of the charity.

B). The annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report has been reported to the Trustees and published on our website. The Trustees response must also be published alongside this.

The Charity Chair, Joe Wilkinson, is the Member Responsible for Complaints. (MRC). He will ensure that the board of trustees are kept informed on all matters relating to the Housing service, including customer satisfaction and complaints. The Housing and Estates Coordinator is responsible for managing complaints day to day and the CEO provides guidance and support in managing this. The Chairs response is published on the website along with the results of the Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report.