

Report by: Hannah Crosbie - HR & Governance Manager
Board Meeting: 11 August 2025
Agenda item: 8
Subject: Annual Complaints Report

Purpose of the report: To update board on complaints for the year ending 31 March 2025.

Decision Needed

The Board is asked to note this report.

Financial Implications

Failure to meet the standards set out in the housing ombudsman code of complaints could lead to legal action, possible compensation, fines, and damage to the reputation of the association.

Risk

Risks include damage to the association's reputation and potential negative impact on current or new partnerships and failure to meet the Consumer Standards

Introduction

This report is designed to inform the Board of the type of issues that have been raised and dealt with under CHA's Complaints, Compliments and Comments policy and procedure.

The report also demonstrates compliance with the Housing Ombudsman code of complaints and self-assessment.

We welcome feedback of all types and complaints; compliments and comments are used to help us shape our services to meet the needs of our tenants and other customers.

Complaints

The Housing Ombudsman defines a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction, however, made about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the association, its staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident, group of residents or stakeholder.

From 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025, we received a total of 12 complaints. The calculation in the KPI table is prescribed by the regulator (12 complaints ÷ 442 homes) × 1000 = 28.

1 complaint out of the 12 was escalated to stage 2 and dealt with by the Head of Resources.

All complaints were acknowledged in the 5-day KPI timeframe, and all received a formal response within the 10-day KPI timeframe, apart from the stage 2 complaint which needed significant investigation.

Lessons Learned

Staff Communication

Five complaints were received concerning staff communication, specifically relating to interactions between residents and the Head of Housing & Property Services and the Head of Assets. Tenants expressed dissatisfaction with both the communication style and the overall approach of these post holders.

The core issue in all complaints was that tenants had been assured, during site visits, that certain repairs would be carried out. However, these promises were not formally recorded, resulting in the works not being actioned.

Repairs not being completed on time

Five complaints were received regarding delays in completing repairs and outstanding works. All five tenants expressed dissatisfaction with the length of time taken to carry out the necessary jobs. Upon investigation, it was found that these delays were related to outstanding works left unresolved following the end of Penny Lane Builders' contract and during the mobilisation period of M&Y.

Tenants had been issued letters informing them of potential disruption to routine works during this transitional period. All outstanding repairs for the five tenants were completed before the end of the financial year.

We are currently working closely with the contractor to ensure that future jobs are completed within agreed timeframes and that effective communication with tenants is maintained. Steps are being taken to identify the root causes of overdue jobs, and this is a standing item in our contractor management liaison meetings. Additionally, overdue jobs are reported in the quarterly performance report to the Board.

Rent Rise & Maintenance of Fixture and Fittings

One complaint related to a rent registration application submitted to the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). The Head of Housing & Property Services handled the matter after the tenant raised concerns about a question regarding improvements they had made to their home.

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The complaint was upheld. Following this, the Head of Housing & Property Services contacted the VOA directly, who confirmed that any improvements made by the tenant are completely disregarded in the rent assessment and do not influence the rent level.

Decarbonisation works

One complaint was received from a tenant who was dissatisfied with the quality of work carried out by the contractor delivering the decarbonisation programme. Initially, the complaint was not submitted through the formal complaints process and was addressed informally by the Head of Housing & Property Services.

The matter was later escalated to Stage 2 after the tenant raised their concerns directly with the HR & Governance Manager. At this stage, the Head of Resources took over the investigation. Following a full review, the complaint was upheld, and compensation was offered to the tenant in line with Housing Ombudsman guidance.

The tenant declined the compensation and had since escalated the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman. As of 30th July, the Ombudsman has contacted the organisation requesting further information.

Complaint Handling Code

The Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code sets out requirements to allow landlords to respond to complaints effectively and fairly. The purpose of the code enables landlords to resolve complaints raised by tenants quickly and to use the data and learning from complaints.

Landlords are required to submit a self-assessment against the code annually. A copy of the code of complaints compliance checklist is at the end of this report.

Although we comply with the Housing Ombudsman Code of complaints, we know there is more work to do on this. Following the response from the regulator with regards to the key lessons learnt for landlords there is still plenty of work to do improve complaints handling and engaging with tenants effectively.

Going forwards

The policy has been implemented to all staff, and it is crucial that complaints are reported correctly, and tenants are communicated with right throughout the process.

SASSHA 360 has a complaints module that we plan to introduce going forwards.

The Internal Audit, conducted by TIAA in January, resulted in a substantial assurance rating. However, the HR & Governance Manager raised concerns about the accuracy of this rating, noting that although a formal complaints policy exists, staff were not consistently adhering to it.

An implementation session had been delivered to staff, covering key aspects of complaint handling, how tenants can submit complaints, how these are investigated, common complaint types, lessons learned, and how outcomes are communicated to tenants. Despite this, it was identified that improvements are needed. Specifically, it was agreed that all complaints should be reported directly to the Resources Team to ensure timely acknowledgment and investigation by the appropriate staff member.

To address these gaps, managers will ensure that staff attend Housing Ombudsman training resources, which will be incorporated into Wednesday morning closure sessions. Additionally, more in-depth complaints handling training is currently being sourced, with all managers expected to participate.

Going forwards we will look to analyse the data further and adding information around protected characteristics etc when reporting.