



**Annual Complaints  
Performance &  
Service  
Improvement Report  
  
2024-2025**

## **Board of Directors**

Robin Lawler (Chair)

Ian Pitteway

Greg Gottig

Councillor Tracy Kelly

Councillor Philip Cusack

Councillor John Merry

## **Executive Lead**

James Sharpe

## **Customer Experience Manager**

Sarah Saxon

## **1. Purpose of the report**

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide to members information concerning the performance of Complaints handling, including service improvements arising from Complaints, for the financial year of April 2024-March 2025).
- Assure members of compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code ('the code'), and the reporting requirements thereof.
- Secure approval of the revised Governance Manual considering the role of Member Responsible for Complaints.
- To facilitate a response from the Board regarding the organisations approach to, The Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling code requires that housing providers provide specific information in their annual report to their Board, which includes:
  - A self-assessment against the Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.
  - Qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance which must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept.
  - Any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman.
  - The service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints, and learning from complaints, for producing an annual report to residents.

## **2. Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment (The Code) (a)**

A self-assessment against each of the seventy-two requirements of The Code and our Complaints Policy has been completed and had identified 100% compliance. Commentary has been provided to confirm the level of compliance.

The Code has required a change to the Governance Manual to clarify the role of the 'Member Responsible for Complaints.' The change is set out in the Governance Manual extract below, with the full version of the updated.

## **3. Member Responsible for Complaints**

The purpose of the Member Responsible for Complaints ('MRC') is to:

- Promote a positive complaint handling culture with Together Housing now following our complaints policy.
- Ensure the Board receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance.
- Have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.
- Ensure compliance with statutory Complaint Handling Code as far as the role of the Board pertains.

#### 4. Complaints summary: April 2024-March 2025

The following table details the outcome of complaints at both stage one and stage two each level:

<b>Address of Complaint:</b>	<b>Area of Complaint:</b>	<b>Stage One Response:</b>	<b>Stage Two Response:</b>	<b>Notes:</b>
52 Blossom Way	Anti-Social Behaviour	Response Unclear	Upheld	Stage One response is unclear and does not reference whether the ABS policy has been followed but rather lists a number of actions taken in an attempt to manage the ABS. Managed move offered at Stage 2 due to loss of ABS evidence by Pendleton Together.
58 Leven Street	Latent Defect	Not Upheld	-	Latent defect around the condition of the garden. No service failure in Pendleton Together's management was found.
Apt 12 478 Liverpool Street	Repairs/Customer Service	Not Upheld	-	Engineers attended the communal door on multiple occasions and found it to be working. The call to the customer service team was listened to and no inappropriate behaviour was observed from staff.
Apt 5, 4 Knowsley Avenue	Defects	Not Upheld	-	No service failure in Pendleton Together's management was found. Concern was directed back to Seddons.
360 Eccles New Road	Defects	Not Upheld		No service failure in Pendleton Together's management was found. Concern was directed back to Seddons.
19 Joe Martin Street	Service Failure	Upheld	-	Out of hours provided unclear information about a repair issue and advised that the water in the property should not be used over the weekend – this should have been escalated to Pendleton Together's on call officer.
Apt 17, 4 Knowsley Avenue	Service Failure	Upheld	-	Complaint relates to cleanliness of communal spaces.

5 Ryall Avenue South	Defects	Not Upheld	-	No service failure found.
Apt 4 Longshaw House	Anti-Social Behaviour & Cleanliness of communal spaces	Withdrawn but later reinstated.	Partially Upheld	Complaint around Cleanliness of the Block was upheld at stage 2, complaint around ABS was not. Escalated to the Ombudsman, upheld as ABS policy not followed. £350 compensation ordered. No malpractice identified in complaints procedure.
Apt 15 Ferguson House	Anti-Social Behaviour	Upheld	-	Advice around threats made against this customer was missing and calls reporting ASB were not returned following call centre contacts.

## **5. Complaints Handling Performance (The Code) (b)**

### **Complaints Handled Refused Complaints**

We may refuse to accept a complaint only in the limited circumstances permitted by the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. During the reporting period, no complaints were refused.

Where a complaint is refused, we clearly explain the reasons for the decision to the resident and advise them of their right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman. Where a refusal is due to insufficient information, residents are also advised that they may re-contact us should they be able to provide the information required to enable an investigation to proceed.

### **Satisfaction with Complaint Handling**

To strengthen our understanding of residents' experiences and ensure feedback is captured in a meaningful and timely way, we are developing more direct approaches to customer engagement and scrutiny. This includes increasing direct contact with residents following the conclusion of complaints, alongside the introduction of resident-involved scrutiny panels. These panels will provide an opportunity for residents to review complaint handling, service delivery, and outcomes in more detail, enabling us to gather qualitative feedback, test whether learning has been effectively embedded, and ensure resident insight directly informs service improvement. This approach supports transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

## **6. Service Requests**

Service requests often represent early indicators of dissatisfaction or potential service failure and provide valuable insight into the performance of our services and their ability to deliver positive outcomes for residents. While the Housing Ombudsman clarifies that service requests are not complaints, they must still be recorded, monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

The themes identified from service requests during the reporting period are consistent with those emerging from formal complaints. These primarily relate to dissatisfaction with communication, most commonly linked to ongoing matters where residents have needed to make repeated contact to seek updates regarding repairs and anti-social behaviour.

## **7. Improvements**

A number of improvements to complaints handling were implemented during the 2024/25 financial year, with further enhancements planned, including:

- **Strengthening organisational capacity**  
In line with the Housing Ombudsman's expectation that landlords have the capacity to resolve issues effectively and learn from complaints, we have increased internal recruitment to ensure key services are appropriately resourced and accountable.

- Policy review informed by complaints and learning  
 We have implemented a structured programme of policy review to ensure policies are compliant, reflect best practice, and incorporate learning from complaints and service requests, supporting consistency and fairness in decision-making, for example the ongoing review into our ABS policy and subsequent management of cases.
- Enhanced Board oversight and challenge:  
 Board membership has been strengthened to broaden skills and experience, improving strategic oversight and ensuring appropriate challenge, in line with the Ombudsman's expectations around governance and senior accountability.
- Introduction of specialist Board sub-committees:  
 Board sub-committees, including an Assets sub-committee, have been established to provide focused scrutiny of performance, risk, and compliance in key operational areas, supporting effective governance and assurance. Additional sub-committees are also planned including a 'complaints and customer services sub-committee'.
- Improved resident engagement and scrutiny arrangements:  
 To meet the Ombudsman's emphasis on meaningful resident involvement, we are looking to move beyond current provision and develop more direct resident scrutiny arrangements, including resident-involved scrutiny panels that will influence service improvement and help to hold the organisation to account.
- Introduction of a Development Plan:  
 The introduction of the development plan, alongside the appointment of a Clerk of Works, is intended to improve the quality of properties at handover, reducing the number of defects experienced by residents. This approach also supports the early identification of issues, clearer communication, and the timely resolution of concerns at the first point of contact.
- Rents and service charge transparency and compliance:  
 The Rents and Service Charge Policy has been amended following identified concerns. The Regulator has been informed and is supportive of the revised approach, supporting transparency and fairness in line with Ombudsman expectations.
- Clearer performance monitoring and reporting:  
 A revised performance scorecard has been introduced to improve transparency, oversight, and trend analysis, enabling early identification of service failures and supporting continuous improvement.
- The planned introduction of 'You Said, We Did' reporting:  
 A 'You Said, We Did' approach is planned for introduction with the intention of clearly demonstrating how complaints, feedback, and resident insight have informed service improvements.
- Responsive changes to development specifications:  
 Development specifications have been revised in response to resident feedback and complaint learning, including the introduction of in-house security measures (such as

CCTV and door entry systems) and improvements to bin store design, demonstrating tangible service improvement.

- Improving accessibility and inclusion:  
Improvements to the accessibility of communal entrances are planned across existing blocks, alongside the inclusion of enhanced accessibility standards within future developments. This approach aims to better meet residents' needs and reflects the Ombudsman's expectations in relation to equality, inclusion, and the provision of reasonable adjustments.

## **8. Remaining Compliance Areas**

The Housing Ombudsman publishes an annual report for registered providers where it has considered complaints referred by residents about that landlord.

During the period April 2024 to March 2025, the Housing Ombudsman did not make any determinations in relation to complaints brought by Dérive Housing residents. As a result, no annual report has been issued for this period, and the landlord has not received any publications from the Ombudsman relating to its performance.

It should be noted that the Housing Ombudsman is currently considering a complaint submitted by a resident who is in the process of purchasing their home from us. The matter has been progressed with urgency in light of the resident's medical circumstances. Once a determination has been issued, the outcome will be shared with Members and reflected in the 2025–26 Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report.

## **9. Oversight and Accountability**

Our plans for the coming year are focused on strengthening oversight, accountability, and assurance in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. This includes ensuring clear governance arrangements, effective scrutiny of complaints handling, and robust mechanisms for learning and service improvement.

Key actions include:

- Strengthened Board oversight of complaints handling:  
In line with the Complaint Handling Code's requirement for governing body oversight, we will enhance Board scrutiny through the introduction of additional sub-committees, including a dedicated Complaints and Customer Services sub-committee. This will provide focused oversight of complaint volumes, timeliness, outcomes, compliance with the Code, and learning from complaints, ensuring appropriate challenge and accountability at senior level.
- Clear accountability and performance assurance:  
Complaints performance, trends, and learning will continue to be reported regularly through revised performance scorecards, enabling the Board and sub-committees to monitor compliance, identify emerging risks, and seek assurance that appropriate action is being taken where service failures are identified.

- **Review of the Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) Policy:**  
A comprehensive review of the Antisocial Behaviour Policy will be undertaken to ensure it reflects the principles of fairness, accessibility, proportionality, and victim-focused practice, as set out in the Complaint Handling Code. Learning from complaints and resident feedback will be embedded within the revised policy to support consistent and effective case management.
- **Review of Service Level Agreements with management agents:**  
We will carry out a full review of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with our management agents particularly in relation to ASB and complaint handling. This will ensure that roles, responsibilities, response times, escalation routes and reporting requirements are clearly defined and aligned with the Complaint Handling Code. Learning from complaints and customer feedback will inform revisions, and compliance will be monitored through ongoing performance reporting.
- **Embedding learning and continuous improvement:**  
In accordance with the Code's expectations on learning from complaints, outcomes and themes will be reviewed at senior level, with actions tracked through internal governance and assurance frameworks to ensure learning leads to demonstrable service improvement.

These arrangements are intended to ensure complaints handling is transparent, fair, and resident-focused, with clear accountability and oversight at all levels of the organisation.