



**Annual Complaints
Performance &
Service
Improvement Report

2023-2024**

Board of Directors

Robin Lawler (Chair)

Greg Gottig

Ian Pitteway

Councillor Tracy Kelly

Councillor Philip Cusack

Councillor John Merry

Chief Executive

James Sharpe

Director of Customer Experience

Natalie Hinchliffe

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 year ending December 2024.
- 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, and this will be subject to an internal audit taking place in May 2025. The current Code self-assessment is provided here in.

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

The following table expresses the outcome of complaints at each level, including the number of Refused complaints. Outstanding complaints are those which have rolled into the new 2024-25 year:

Address	Summary of complaint	Follow on action	Notes	Gender	Age
40 The Green	No heating		Upheld - compensation £50	Unknown	29
Apt6 Longshaw House	Ventilation System	Defect	PT agreed to pay elec bill circa £300	Male	34
43 The Green	Ventilation System	Defect	Resident happy that we had passed to Seddon's and chased	Female	36
9 Ryall Avenue South	Ventilation System	Defect	Stage 1 sent also some other issues Seddon's	Female	31
40 The Green	Rent over payment		Explanation provided regarding rent over payment and outstanding compensation paid on receipt of bank details	Unknown	29
apt 15 4 Knowsley	Staff member (Income team) and Communal Cleaning		Not upheld	Female	24
5 Ryall Avenue South	Outstanding repairs	Defect	Email sent confirming and continued to stay in touch - escalated to Derive	Female	33
Apt 5 4 Knowsley	Repairs and Maintenance - flood in property and outstanding issue with patio door		Contractor did attend flood but did not enter property. Patio door was damaged by security	Female	23
Apt 3 4 Knowsley	Repairs and Maintenance - Ongoing Leak	Defect	Escalated to Seddon's	Female	23
Apt 3 4 Knowsley	Repairs and Maintenance- Ongoing leak (Stage 2)	responded by Derive	Management Move offered		

5. Complaints Handling Performance

Complaints Handled Refused Complaints

We occasionally must refuse to accept a complaint which is permitted for only a limited number of reasons. This year a total of 0 complaints were received and where a complaint is refused, we advise the customer of our reasons for refusal, and their rights to contact the Housing Ombudsman. Where the refusal was due to lack of information, we also advise the resident to contact us again should they become able to engage in the investigation by providing information so refused.

Satisfaction with Complaint Handling

Multiple attempts and methods of contact were used to seek feedback from complainants regarding their experience of the complaints process. This helps us to monitor customer satisfaction, perception, and the quality and compliance of complaint handling.

6. Service Requests

Service Requests are early indications of dissatisfaction or service failure and are an important source of information regarding the performance of our services and their ability to provide positive outcomes for residents. The Housing Ombudsman clarifies that Service Requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored, and reviewed regularly.

The themes which represent the service requests that we have received are consistent with those identified from Complaints. These were concerning dissatisfaction regarding poor communication, largely associated with ongoing complaints where the resident is having to contact us to find out.

7. Improvements

There are a number of improvements to Complaints administration and handling, including:

- Improvements to tools for complaints investigators, such as a checklist for investigation steps, and complaint response templates.
- Improved use of the acknowledgement period for setting up appointments for investigators to establish an early understanding of the complaint, maximising the use of each of the 10 days available.
- A review of the Customer Complaints and Feedback Policy, with refresher training to colleagues on the correct triage of dissatisfaction to either service requests or Complaints, in-line with the customer's expectations.

8. Remaining Compliance Areas

The Housing Ombudsman provide an annual report for registered providers where they have considered complaints by that Landlord because of residents' complaints being considered by them.

There have been no complaint decisions made by the Housing Ombudsman concerning complaints brought by Derive Housing residents in the period April 2023 to December 2024. Therefore, no annual report has been produced, nor have we received any publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.

It should be noted that the Housing Ombudsman are currently considering a case brought forward by resident that is in the process of purchasing their home from us and having some urgency due to the medical circumstances of the resident. When known, the determination of the Housing Ombudsman will be shared with Members and included in the 2024-25 annual report.

9. Oversight and Accountability

Our plans for the coming year focus on bolstering accountability and oversight of complaints handling, performance, and learning. This includes:

- Continuing to hold the executive to account on performance of complaint response timescales and escalations to ensure residents are receiving a quality response to their complaint promptly.
- Reviewing our governance structures to ensure the profile of complaints and a continuous improvement culture is prioritised. This will be done through the re-design of what is currently the HR and Governance Committee and their terms of reference, and the work of the Neighbourhood Network and how they ensure the customer perspective is reflected in our plans for improvement.
- Continuing to build on capturing and monitoring Service Requests as this represents the greatest opportunity for service improvements and value for money gains, helping us to identify ways to deliver services right first time.