

Housing Complaints Task Force

25th September 2024

Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Task Force Expectations
- Actions from Last Meeting
- Q1 figures trends & preventative actions
- Housing Ombudsman/Regulator update
- TSM Q4/End of Year Results
- Lessons Learned and Preventative Actions for last quarter
- Up Next...
- AOB

Task Force Expectations



Trends and Lessons – Identify and understand.



Accountability for what we are changing as a result.



Evidence gathering around changes (meeting minutes, TORs etc)



What else do you need?

Actions from Previous Meeting

DW & JH to speak to Nigel and Kelly about
categorising complaints – COMPLETE

Housing Repair Complaints Q1

Q1 – Received	BMBS/DLO	Asset Compliance	Asset Management	Total
2023/24	104	24	3	131
2024/25	71	62	8	141
% Change	-32%	158%	166%	8%

Response Times

Building Services responded to 62 complaints in Q1, with 53 (85.5%) of these complaint responses breaching the 10-day deadline. Asset Compliance responded to 41 complaints in Q1, with 39 (85.3%) of these complaint responses breaching the 10-day deadline. Asset Management responded to 6 complaints in Q1, with 4 (66.7%) of these complaint responses breaching the 10-day deadline.

Whilst the annual data shows a big decrease in DLO complaints and a rise in Asset Compliance complaints, on reflection the likelihood is that not all complaints were being completed correctly during the stage one complaint process. The overall complaints for the three teams above have increased by 15.

Themes and Trends

With the launch of the new complaints system in Q1, we are now able to have improved insight as to the learning outcomes of complaints. Whilst in this quarter this only relates to 4 working days, the following improvements have been made:

- Visiting operative was spoken to and advised how to handle similar situations in the future after a tenant complained that our member of staff was banging on the front door and garden gate aggressively as they had not been in a position to answer the door straight away.
- A tenant complained that their kitchen sink was leaking however, the learning outcome was that we needed to respond in a timelier manner and improve communication. In this comment there is no notes on how this was achieved.
- Another lesson learnt was that we were going to “try and improve contractor communication” but with no other information.

Discussion: How can we improve lessons learnt

Tenancy Services & Housing Solutions Complaints Q1

Q1 – Received	Tenancy Management	Housing Solutions
2023/24	13	20
2024/25	33	13
% Change	154%	-35%

Response Times

Tenancy Services responded to 25 complaints in Q1, with 3 (12%) of these complaint responses breaching the 10-day deadline.
Housing Solutions responded to 12 complaints in Q1, with 2 (17%) of these complaint responses breaching the 10-day deadline.

Themes & Trends

We have seen a large increase in Tenancy Services complaints from 13 in Q1 last year to 33 in Q1 this year.

Agreed with Rob that we are going to do some further analysis on these complaints to establish why there has been such a large increase in tenancy management complaints. For context 7 of these complaints were upheld and 16 of these complaints were not upheld.

Housing Solution complaints have reduced as per above. Only one of these complaints were upheld.

Complaints received were regarding Gateway to Homechoice, Homelessness and general dissatisfaction with bandings received.

Stage Two Complaints & Housing Ombudsman Cases

Stage Two

During Q1 the Councils' received 17 stage two complaints regarding Housing Repairs, Asset Management and Asset Compliance.

We are continuing to see complaints escalated at stage two for the following reasons:

- Delays to part of our complaints process at stage one, usually an untimely stage one response
- Lack of communication prior to a complaint coming in and being dissatisfied with the outcome
- Stage one complaint response not considering the whole complaint. Some stage one complaint responses have not considered the whole history of the complaint.

Ombudsman Cases

No decisions were made against either Council in Q1.

During Q2 we have provided information relating to a complaint and expect a determination in the next 3 – 6 months.



Annual Complaints Report 2023/24

- Annual report has been presented to SLT and is due to go to Overview and Scrutiny in January 2025 – in line with ombudsman requirements.
- Cabinet to see the report ahead of O&S.
- All ombudsman determinations to be shared with SLT moving forwards.
- Link between complaints and reputational risk.

Housing Ombudsman Latest

Sanctuary Housing

Review carried out focussed on repairs, record keeping and tenant vulnerabilities following 2 severe maladministration determinations for repairs relating to leaks and damp and mould.

Review of 4000 internal cases identified 236 cases “where there is limited evidence that roofing works were carried out in an efficient and timely manner”.

236 residents were contacted by the landlord to see if there are any outstanding issues. If works have not been completed, they are being progressed as a matter of urgency and apologies issued.

They also conducted workshops with residents to seek improvements and work on the feedback given. In the 2 cases that led to this wider order, the residents faced significant distress and inconvenience chasing and waiting for their roof repairs to be resolved, with communication issues rife throughout.

Housing Ombudsman Latest

Repairs

The independent review found that repairs were not always completed within timescales, there were multiple repeated contacts and follow up repairs, and lower levels of satisfaction when contractors were used.

- The landlord has changed its approach to contractor management, providing closer oversight of the quality of repairs and value for money delivered. This has resulted in a full review of the cancellation and rebooking process, repairs surveys and inspection process.
- Residents told the landlord it wanted faster repairs, better communication, more 'right first time' jobs completed, and clarity around which repairs were landlord and which repairs were resident responsibility.

To improve repairs delays and escalations the landlord says it will introduce a root cause analysis process to better underpin service improvement plans, roll out predictive analytics to identify more proactively homes at risk of damp and mould and enhance data management and reporting to deliver improved end-to-end repairs journey.

Housing Ombudsman Latest

Record Keeping

The cases showed there is a risk that repairs are closed without being completed and the use of off-line systems increased the risk of data gaps. In some cases there was also over-reliance on spreadsheets.

For damp and mould cases specifically, the landlord has introduced a damp and mould performance dashboard to give visibility of open repairs and complaints. The landlord's Executive Committee receives a weekly report of cases and the Group Board receive a report at every meeting.

It is also using data to identify 'hot' and 'cold' properties, resulting in visits to proactively engage with customers who have reported multiple issues, or visits where the landlord has not heard from a customer for 2 years.

To improve its overall complaint handling, the independent review recommended the landlord improve learning from complaints through live complaints information, equip leaders more to listen and act on resident voice, broaden guidance in relation to reasonable adjustments and to strengthen its application of the compensation procedure.

Housing Ombudsman Latest

Vulnerabilities

- The independent review looked at whether repairs and escalations considered the resident's vulnerabilities. It also examined how resident vulnerabilities are recorded.
- The landlord identified various risk factors on several themes such as health and wellbeing and tenancy, looking at short term health conditions, care leavers and those who have fled domestic abuse.
- The review found that the inspections team are not provided with adequate training to sufficiently understand wellbeing, vulnerability, and empathy. This has potentially led to wellbeing or vulnerability concerns not being identified when carrying out an inspection.
- To improve on capturing individual circumstances, the landlord says it will develop and implement of revised vulnerability policy, expand its 'Think Customer' and vulnerability training programme across the organisation and implement a new Customer Relationship Management system.

Full Report can be found here [Wider orders issued for Sanctuary | Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/wider-orders-issued-for-sanctuary/)



Over to you for lessons learned and Preventative Actions Identified and over this Quarter

Up Next...

01

Complaint
Handling –
Changes to teams
and system
training/access

02

New Complaints
System reporting
update – James

03

Complaints
Scrutiny Activity by
Tenant Board

04

Work to be started
with tenants on
dissatisfaction
with ASB