

Annual Complaints Handling Performance and Service Improvement Report

Background

Empower Housing Association (EHA) welcomes all feedback from tenants and their representatives and recognises that this feedback provides valuable information that we can use to tailor the services we offer and how we deliver them.

A key part of this feedback is tenant complaints, which allow us to learn from experiences where things may have gone wrong and make amendments and improvements to our working practices to ensure they don't happen again.

Having reviewed our approach to complaint handling against the revised Housing Ombudsman Service Statutory Complaint Handling Code, we will be providing focus and emphasis, through our quarterly and annual reporting to Board, on our performance, learning and any resulting service improvements for tenants.

Annual Self-Assessment against Complaint Handling Code (June 24)

The completed annual self-assessment of EHAs complaint handling demonstrates compliance with the Complaint Handling Code and gives assurance to Board that EHA continues to provide an accessible and positive complaint handling process overall for tenants.

Complaint Handling Performance

Detailed below is a breakdown of the number of complaints including themes and service areas which have been the focus of complaints April - March 2023/24:

Complaints Performance 2023/24

	Number of complaints refused	Total number of complaints	Theme of complaints	Complaint Stage		
				Stage 1	Stage 2	Ombudsman
Day to day repairs	0	0	N/A	0	0	0
Planned Improvements	0	1	Communication Policy/Procedure Records/systems Standard of works	1	0	0
Cyclical Maintenance	0	0	N/A	0	0	0
Compliance	0	0	N/A	0	0	0
Housing Management	0	1	Communication Policy/Procedure Records/systems	1	0	0
Anti-Social Behaviour	0	6	Policy/Procedure Records/systems	6	0	0
Rents/Income Management	0	0	N/A	0	0	0
Lettings	0	0	N/A	0	0	0
Adaptations	0	0	N/A	0	0	0
Total	0	8		8	0	0

As a result of the complaints received, while no complaints were escalated to Stage 2, all complaints were upheld and as a result key learning and resulting service improvements were identified, ensuring

that EHA does not repeat any failures and the tenants experience and standard of service delivery remains the best it can be at all times.

8 complaints were received during the year, equating to 18 complaints per 1000 homes.

The table below details key complaint learning and service improvements across all EHA services over the last 12 months where complaints were received:

Key Learning and Service Improvements

Service Area	Complaints Upheld
Planned Improvements	1
Key Learning	
<p>Lack of communication in the coordination of work dates and slow responses was responsible for delays in works being completed Data records on age of components e.g. bathrooms/kitchens need to be accurate The process for obtaining quotes for works to be undertaken could have been managed more effectively Lack of effective post inspection of works resulted in poor workmanship not being identified at the earliest opportunity and remedied</p>	
Service Improvements	
<p>Review of stock condition and lifecycle data held to be validated at the point a report for replacement is received from a tenant/representative Review of the process for obtaining quotes for work to ensure timely follow up to eradicate delays in works being procured and actioned Ensure supplier quality is managed by completing pre/post inspections for sample jobs throughout the year. Colleagues requested to record all contact/actions on SDM including pre/post inspections.</p>	
Housing Management	1
Key Learning	
<p>There was ineffective timely communication with the tenant and care workers re the initial service request including lack of regular updates and ineffective record keeping of contact Decision making was protracted and could have been made more promptly The process for obtaining quotes for works to be undertaken should have been managed</p>	
Service Improvements	
<p>Improved comprehensive records of contact and action to be recorded on the Housing Management system including keeping tenants/stakeholders updated when there are delays in progress of works Review of the process for obtaining quotes for work to ensure timely follow up to eradicate delays in works being procured and actioned Colleague training completed re complaints handling</p>	
Anti Social Behaviour	6
Key Learning	
<p>Clarity and training needed for colleagues on determining what an ASB case is and how to record and process Clarity and training needed for colleagues on determining what a complaint is and how to record and process Review of the Housing Management system (SDM) required to develop improved record keeping and monitoring of ASB cases and complaint handling</p>	
Service Improvements	
<p>ASB training completed for Housing Management colleagues. Complaint Handling training completed for all colleagues ASB and Complaints modules developed on the Housing Management system (SDM) to improve record keeping, monitoring and reporting Review of ASB Policy & Procedures</p>	

Housing Ombudsman

There has been no intervention or reporting by the Ombudsman in respect of EHA's compliance with its' own Complaints and Feedback Policy & Procedure and the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) Complaint Handling Code in 2023/24.

EHA continues to review quarterly and annual reports as well as Spotlight and Good Practice reports published by the Housing Ombudsman to adapt and use for continuous learning and service improvement. EHA also subscribes to the HOS e-learning hub ensuring a continuous learning culture is embedded across the organisation.

Colleague Training

All colleagues have attended Complaint Handling training which includes how colleagues are expected to handle complaints in line with EHA's Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedure and to raise awareness of the Complaint Handling Code and the expectations of EHA's tenants in respect of how EHA must respond, the Housing Ombudsman Service and the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). Colleagues within the Housing Management team have attended training on ASB.

Sharing Learning and Service Improvements

EHA will share learning from complaints and how that learning is resulting in service improvements through:

- Tenant newsletters
- EHA website
- Colleague team meetings/bulletin
- Direct engagement with tenants through home visits and the establishment of specific engagement/feedback sessions

A quarterly bulletin will be issued to all colleagues, reporting on the number of complaints, service requests, learning and service improvements as well as detailing forthcoming refresher training/webinars for colleagues to join as appropriate.

Conclusion

Through reviewing all complaints handled in 23/24 we have identified key areas of learning and areas for service improvement which will ensure we continue to improve services to tenants as a result of their feedback including:

- Improved communications with tenants, updated policies and procedures and colleague training
- Improved record keeping through the development of the use of the Complaints and ASB modules on the Housing Management system (SDM)
- Complaint and ASB training delivered to relevant colleagues
- Review of the process for obtaining 3 quotes to eradicate delays in works undertaken