

Complaints Performance 2024/25

Introduction

Welcome to our first published Complaints Performance Report, this outlines our performance dealing with complaints under the Complaints Ombudsman - Complaints Handling Code 2024 as adopted by our Board.

The report reflects the excellent performance between April 2024 and April 2025 in delivering to our tenants our Issues Raised to Complaints process.

At Sustain, we take issues and complaints raised by tenants as a key performance matter, this is reported to our Board and its Tenant Engagement and Empowerment Committee on a quarterly basis. Not only are matters dealt with efficiently and in a sympathetic fashion, but we also take the learnings from each case to inform and improve our service delivery and processes. The lessons and learning are also incorporated in our Tenant Engagement Strategy which is renewed each year, to ensure dealing with complaints is fully resourced and reported upon.

I am pleased to report that Sustain has continued to improve its performance complaints trend in 2023/24 with the number of formal complaints much reduced from 2022/23. This being down out tenant centric approach generally, and specifically dealing with all issues raised as if they are complaints, allowing for faster resolution of matters before they turn into formal complaints. Although we deal with a specialised tenant population with a wide variety of complex needs which in turn could lead to increased levels of complaints, our support and property inspections process allow us to contact and engage with our tenants to ensure they have a voice and can raise issues.

Performance

We at Sustain operate under the Complaints Handling Code, which was introduced by the Complaint Ombudsman in 2020 and updated in 2024. This is centred upon giving tenants an formal process to lodge complaints and has issues dealt with in an open and transparent fashion. We operate and comply with this code in all matters including; clarity, the two stage rule, and publishing of our self assessment against the Code in our tenant sections of our website.

Compliance with the code Requirements Required outcomes are as follows;

Section	23/24	%	24/25	%
Section 1 - Definition of a complaint	5 out of 6	100	6 out of 6	100
Section 2 - Exclusions	5 out of 5	100	5 out of 5	100
Section 3- Accessibility and awareness	7 out of 7	100	7 out of 7	100
Section 4 - Complaint handling staff	3 out of 3	100	3 out of 3	100

Section 5 - Complaint handling process	15 out of 15	100	15 out of 15	100
Section 6 - Complaint stages	18 out of 20	90	20 out of 20	100
Section 7 - Putting things right	4 out of 4	100	4 out of 4	100
Section 8 - Self-assessment, reporting and compliance	5 out of 5	100	5 out of 5	100
Section 8 - Scrutiny and oversight: continuous learning & improvement	8 out of 8	100	8 out of 8	100
Total	70 out of 72	97	72 out of 72	100

As Registered Provider of Social Housing we are also governed by the Consumer Standards – which also ensure that tenants have recourse to complain and have a voice. These standards also ensure that we have the maintain standards in terms of Health & Safety Compliance, Damp and Mould Prevention, Complaints, Tenant Satisfaction, and all our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard.

The Consumer Standard also has clear expectations that we listen and are engaged with our tenants. To this end we survey all our tenants on Satisfaction with our services and publish these results – which are good. As part of delivering this standard we have a Tenant Engagement Strategy which is reported to tenants and has been developed with tenants. As a consequence of compliance with this standard, many issues that might lead to a complaint are mitigated and controlled so helping to reduce our complaints levels.

In 2024/25, we received 9 Stage 1 complaints, leading to 1 stage two complaint. This was up from 2023/24, when e received 4 Stage One Complaints leading to 2 Stage Complaints. We dealt with all stage one complaints within agreed timeframes, the one stage two complaints was resolved.

These Complaints relate to in the main support provision issues. We have learnt from these complaints – developing a new reporting software which develops and real time monitors support plans and support activities given to Tenants.

It should be noted that tenants who brought up issues and complaints were satisfied with the process.

We operate a two-stage complaint process and, from our review of our performance, we've seen that by listening and understanding issues raised by tenants, delivering the correct actions, and making sure we learn from our failings drives service improvement. Nearly all complaints are resolved satisfactorily at the first stage. It's important that if tenants are unhappy with the service they've received from us, we're open to listening to their feedback, believing their stories and are honest about where we got it wrong and how we can prevent similar issues in the future.

All complaints made have been listened to and acted upon, none of the complaints we received were upheld, which we believe highlights our transparent and open approach to complaints handling.

At every stage of our complaints process we ensure our tenants are aware of their right to contact the Housing Ombudsman. We co-operate with the Housing Ombudsman in any

reviews or enquiries they have had. For the year 2024 -25 they have reviewed one complaint relating to 23/24. We have no cases of mal administration to report.

A key focus for the Housing Ombudsman is to identify key issues that impact tenants, and share the learning to promote good practice. We take every opportunity to review this learning and see how we can use it to adapt our own approach to complaint handling and improve our tenants experiences. To further this we have a Tenant Engagement Strategy renewed this year, which outlines activities the resources required and outcomes expected, data on and learning from complaints is feed into the Tenant Engagement and Empowerment Committee, the Tenant Forum and the Board. These three bodies who monitor performance and direct actions to improve delivery, this includes engagement with the Birmingham City Exempt Accommodation Quality Scheme/Charter Mark which we have been provisionally graded Silver, the continued development of our unique Issues to complaint system which tracks and deals with issues as they are raised mitigating these developing into full complaint this being operated by a dedicated Complaint Officer, and the conducting of full tenant surveys and engagement activities to all tenants to allow them a full voice. It should be noted that the complaints system operates side by side with our safeguarding systems given the complex support needs of our tenants.

Shane Egan

Transformation Director