

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2023/24

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board information in relation to our complaints performance and service improvements for the year 2023/24. This report includes:

- The annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling code 2024 to ensure our complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.
- An analysis of AHCL's complaint handling performance.
- Any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman.
- The service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints.
- Any annual report about AHCL's performance from the Ombudsman.
- Relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of AHCL.

Background

This annual report is a new requirement following the publication of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling code 2024. The AHCL Board receives regular performance information in relation to complaints performance throughout the year. During the year, we reviewed and distinguished between complaints and service requests which saw a significant reduction in the number of complaints being reported to the Board. Moving forwards, a more thorough investigation of complaints performance using a cross functional complaints team will be undertaken and any recommendations from this group will be considered as part of the wider Corporate Strategy.

Self-Assessment against the Complaint Handling code

The annual self-assessment against the Complaints Handling code is appended. We have assessed our policy as compliant in all areas. A total of 13 formal complaints were accepted for investigation in 2023/24. The reasons for the complaints are detailed below:

Category of complaint	Number received 2023/24
Sales	1
Service Charge	3
Grounds Maintenance	1
Operations	2
Community	3
Defects	2
Ground Rent	1
TOTAL	13

Complaint Handling Performance

A total of 13 formal complaints were received in 2023/24. Of these, 100% were acknowledged within our policy timescale.

During the year 2023/24, we investigated and closed a total of 13 complaints and the following service improvements were identified directly as a result of complaints:

- We outsourced our property management and community support services to First Port Retirement Services
- We outsourced services and service charge management to First Port Retirement Services
- We outsourced rent collection to First Port Retirement Services
- We reviewed our affordability process which now involves an assessment by an independent financial adviser
- We refunded the ground rent which was gifted as a sales incentive

Housing Ombudsman

Two determinations were made by the Housing Ombudsman in 2024, both relating to cases raised with them in the 2023/24 performance year.

The first case was in relation to the calculation and communication of service charges. The complaint was raised with THO in November 2022; evidence was submitted on request in August 2023 and the determination was received on 30 April 2024. The determination found in the resident's favour and we have been instructed to pay the resident £100 in compensation for distress, along with providing him with a full breakdown of his service charge for 2022/23.

The second case was in relation to our sales process and an allegation of mis selling of an apartment at one of our communities was reported to the Ombudsman. The Housing Ombudsman determined that the case was outside of its jurisdiction.

Lessons were learned from both of these cases and service improvements have been implemented, as detailed earlier in this report. Both of these cases were reported to the Board during the year and the one order made by the Housing Ombudsman service was monitored by the Board until complete.

There is no individual landlord performance report published by the Housing Ombudsman for AHCL as they only publish reports for landlords with five or more cases determined during the year. This is because no meaningful performance interpretation is possible where there are fewer than five determinations.

The Board's Response

"The Board is pleased to receive the report and welcomes the appointment of one of our directors to serve as the Member Responsible for Complaints. We recognise the critical role of effective complaints handling in service improvement and resident satisfaction and are committed to fostering continuous improvement through learning. The Annual Complaints and Improvement Report encouraging, and we eagerly anticipate making further improvements in the future. We approve its publication on our website."