

Complaints Taskforce Meeting

Friday 21st April 2023

Attendees: Housing Transformation Manager (HTM)
Director Of Housing (DH)
Customer Liaison Officer (CLO)
Tenant Engagement Coordinator (TCO)
Building Services Admin Team Manager (BSAM)
Neighbourhoods Team Manager (NTM)
Tenancy Service Team Manager (TM)
Interim Compliance Manager (ICM)
Interim Asset Team Manager (ITM)

Two actions carried forwards:

- Complaint response times being reported monthly to cabinet and Senior Leadership Team – HTM/DH
- Complaint Handling Training being rolled out – HTM/CLO

CLO took meeting through figures for Q4 (January – March 2023):

- Quite a big increase in both Building Maintenance and Asset Compliance.
- Response times still in breach but improving.
- Nearly 60% within 10 working day which is an improvement.
- Tenancy Management increased and Housing Solutions decreased. Average response times within guidelines.

HTM added that the government's 'Make it Right' campaign has resulted in an increase for all landlords and we shouldn't focus so much on numbers as it shows that our tenants know how to make a complaint and that they are happy to.

Housing Ombudsman Update – HTM

Special report into Rochdale has been published and highlights include relevant policies, Void standard, information provided, scripts, staff training records, training made, lessons learned and system details held about Tenants. These are all areas we need to work on and improve. Findings from the report were a culture of 'othering' of the residents resulting in them being treated poorly due to being Tenants, Immigrants and Refugees. Patterns of exclusion and marginalisation were exacerbated by poor data. Notes taken by staff advised that the family were just struggling with the English Winter and were lucky to have a roof over their heads. Overcrowding was also blamed. There were important lessons from the deeper dive the Ombudsman carried out and one key finding was around lack of communication.

Awaab's Law is now going through parliament and will be setting response times specifically for damp and mould investigations. Will need to start getting ahead of it to ensure we can be compliant. Next spotlight is on Insight in relation to ensuring we're using data and providing accessible services.

We have been contacted by the Ombudsman to update our self-assessment which CLO has completed and is now on website for transparency and HO requirements.

TSM update

- Satisfaction with complaint handling around 23%. Issues are mostly preventable.
- New reporting now needed and a manual process currently to allow us to report to Regulator in way they require (per 1000 properties and timeliness). These measures will be used to identify who needs an Inspection by the Regulator.

Action: Meeting with CLO and DH to go through complaint system.

Next steps:

- Complaint handling training will be arranged for Q2, delayed by new system coming in taking over CLO time. Will need commitment that all taking part will sign up to customer service charter and work within Housing Ombudsman guidelines. If system training is needed CLO will help deliver.
- Placecube is our new digital platform which will enable better reporting. JH advised main bulk of website has to go live first. Requirements sent to Placecube in terms of reporting last month. Website planned for June/July time and we will follow.
- HTM advised that identifying lessons and actions will be better recorded and evidence will be needed of changes. So learning from complaints will be covered at the training.

Stigma

TCO took group through project Tenant Engagement Team are working on over the next couple of months.

HTM will be auditing complaints information and providing individual feedback but will work with BSAM on this.