

Complaints Taskforce Meeting

7th August 2025

Attendees: David White – Housing Transformation Manager
James Hart – Customer Liaison Officer
Victoria Bond – Assistant Manager, Housing Solutions
Karen Carter – Choice Based Lettings Team Manager
Kerry Lecomber – Tenant Engagement Co-ordinator
Alison Wade – Business Services Manager
Fabio Dellabella – Mechanical Manager
Christie Solomons – Health and Safety Manager
Margaret Taylor – Compliance Co-ordinator
Liz Perryman – Tenant Board Member
Amma Antwi-Yeboah – Head of Housing Solutions
Alan Fletcher-Hill – Compliance Electrical Manager
Rob Longfoot – Head of Housing Management
Polly Bearman – Income Manager
Keeley Whitlock – Customer Resolutions Officer

David opened the meeting and advised that at the next meeting we will complete an end of year review. LP and AAY joining virtually.

Actions from the last meeting

- Fabio Dellabella to be instructed regarding GasCall and a clear and evidence-based process needs to be put in place. **Weekly meetings now taking place, issues include things such as lack of Comms which they're resolving by moving to a text reminder basis and employing Resident Liaison. Completed**
- DF suggested RS, AG and FD meet with DW and JH separately to have a catch up and share actions. **Completed.**
- **Monthly contact updates for contractors to be replicated on compliance side.**
- DW advised that the compensation policy is due for review to ensure amounts are in keeping – DW/JH. **Completed – updated policy on website with reference to Ombudsman guidance.**
- KW has an acknowledgement procedure which she will share with everyone. **Completed.**
- LP – issue with Apello contractor. **DW has spoken with Customer Experience and they require some examples. LP has an example which she will email to DW so it can be raised with Apello.**

Q1 Complaints Stage One & Two)

Split into different areas. Continuing to trend downwards but still a high upheld percentage – 38 out of 58 upheld. Days to acknowledge all well within timeframe.

Assets and Compliance. Assets increased but Compliance decreased. JH reminded to complete the outcomes, so we know amount upheld. Will be including the actual numbers on time.

Tenancy Services slight reduction and good response times. Around half are upheld with quite a few not considered as a compliant.

Housing Solutions slight drop but high amount of complaints not being complaints such as Gateway to Homechoice appeals and response times all within timeframes.

DW advised will be splitting out planned maintenance and aids and adaptations complaints going forwards.

AFH enquired if solar can be split from other electrical. JH advised can be looked at in outcomes and lessons learned. Don't want to make it too complicated front end for tenants when reporting.

Stage 2

Very slight decrease and around half of them upheld. Good response rates.

Themes now much more varied across all service areas. Lack of communication still a big theme from both tenants not getting updated and teams not sharing information. AW reported on good use of text responses so far – 107 responses.

Reminder to share those that cross services.

Compliments

Again, a variety of compliments about different services. Reminder that the feedback@ address being used to forward on compliments. AW enquired about the text responses from repairs – only comments about individual operatives to be forwarded to line managers.

Housing Ombudsman

A variety again with one being rejected and three upheld. Instructions for various apologies, repairs and compensation. Some works already completed by the time we had the judgement.

Housing Ombudsman complaint policy review

DW advised that HO had decided to review our policy, and they came back with thirteen recommendations. On the whole the policy is adequate and fit for purpose – it's mainly just tweaks. Need to be clear where things are outside the policy. Use discretion when outside the policy – 12 months for example. Be more explicit about what we don't consider a complaint and the current six has now increased to twenty. Need to be clear it is available in other formats and document properly to advise of timescales outside of the complaint set on. Also not require tenants to tell us why they want to go to Stage 2.

Regulatory updates

Ipswich Borough Council and East Suffolk have both had judgements.

DW took meeting through some of the comments from the C3 judgement about complaint handling and learning lessons.

Lessons learnt in last quarter and changes made

DF has given a good example of learning from complaints. DW took meeting through an example of it. Will be capturing learning from every stage of complaints right up to Housing Ombudsman judgements. Team discussed the logistics of getting this to work.

JH will complete the first couple of columns to get the information on upheld complaints, and all agreed this system could be very useful. This will then be published quarterly. RL suggested adding in learnings from the type of complaint and the satisfaction with complaint handling. Hoping to share these in the month before the quarterly meetings. Teams can then populate the spreadsheet, and it will be published on the website along with the presentations and minutes from this meeting.

Discussed meeting attendance being dependent on which areas of the business were getting the most complaints. That is skewed as certain parts of the business have a lot more face to face experience with the tenants. VB enquired if managers could have access to the report but probably not yet but will be sending out a month before the meeting will have a Teams site to put in all the reports to go and look.

Action: DW and JH will work out a process for this going forwards.

VB shared learning from a Housing Ombudsman judgement so we can evidence that we are using our discretion where we can. This is even though we're sticking to both our policy and Homelessness legislation. We have requested some clarity. Need to evidence where we are not using discretion as well as where we are.

RL advised that had three themes – signups, void readiness and clarity about communal land. New service model and face to face signups will go towards clearing those things up. Staff training provided on professional boundaries, processes and communication. These have been shared at team meetings. ASB complaint relating to the letters we send out and vulnerability not being captured. Have carried out an exercise on vulnerability and have new training and ways of reporting it.

KW have found some where jobs haven't been logged as emergencies or should have been due to vulnerabilities so are carrying out training. New voids policy and contractor and improvements being written in. Also Zap Carbon were only using the phone not email which has been addressed. Also driving issues for operatives which have been addressed at toolbox talks.

AW advised regular contractor meetings have sharpened up to ensure they are feeding back and complaints being taken very seriously.

Complaints Scrutiny

KL took meeting through the workshops and the forward plan for it.

LP advised she feels like tenants are noticing and feeding back to her that things are improving from customer service line right through to the operatives arriving. They will only see from their perspective but that's very positive.

Any other business

RL enquired about the timelines on the complaints system. JH advised it was first designed when there was a joint code. RL enquired if, when we report at the end of the year is there an opportunity to look at the data and ensure that it looks right. DW advised he thinks it won't make much difference if not recorded on the system, but it could bring the average down slightly. However, we are only required to respond on percentage that are within that – not how far they were within it.

RL reminded all teams to be checking the system regularly. Put reminders in the diary for checking to ensure that, if they have to go to a different team that gives them time. DW agreed it had happened recently where a team didn't review a complaint until day 8 and then had to pass it on to another department.

AFH advised obviously going into holiday seasons which could cause problems. Also do you need to acknowledge it even if you can respond straight away? DW advised you do as according to the code it needs both. Also, if that's explained to the tenant.

DW advised these meetings are so much quicker as our performance has improved so much but going forwards will be focussing on lessons learnt.

Next meeting due November 2025.