



Housing Complaints Task Force Q1

April – August 2025

Agenda

- ▶ Welcome & Introductions
- ▶ Actions from Last Meeting
- ▶ Q1 Complaint (Stage 1 & 2) figures by Team
- ▶ Q1 Housing Ombudsman Determinations
- ▶ Housing Ombudsman Updates, and Regulator Update
- ▶ Compliments
- ▶ Lessons Learned – Moving Forwards
- ▶ Complaint Scrutiny Update
- ▶ AOB



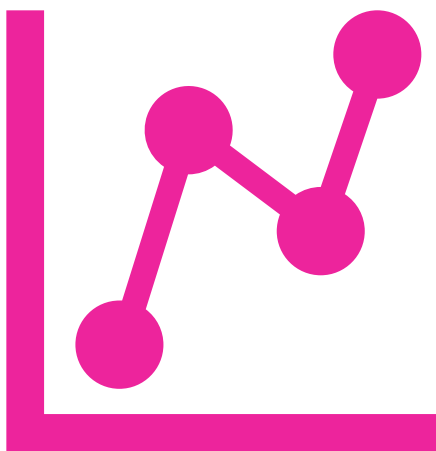
Actions from Previous Meeting



- ▶ Fabio Dellabella to be instructed regarding Gascall and a clear and evidence-based process needs to be put in place.
- ▶ DF suggested RS, AG and FD meet with DW and JH separately to have a catch up and share actions. – Complete
- ▶ DW advised that the compensation policy is due for review to ensure amounts are in keeping – DW/JH. - Complete
- ▶ KW has a procedure which she will share with everyone.
- ▶ LP raised issues with out of hours contractor not responding to requests in the required SLA's.

Complaints Data

Q1 – April – July 2025



Housing Repairs and Maintenance (inc. Voids) – Q1



- ▶ Year on Year Comparisons
 - ▶ Q1 2024/25 – 71 Stage One Complaints
 - ▶ Q1 2025/26 – 58 Stage One Complaints Received
- ▶ Outcomes for Q4
 - ▶ 38 – Upheld
 - ▶ 9 - Not Upheld
 - ▶ 2 - Not Considered to be a complaint
 - ▶ 3 - Comment Received
 - ▶ 6 – not yet determined
- ▶ Timeframes
 - ▶ 3.10 days average to acknowledge
 - ▶ 9.00 days average to respond

Property Assets and Compliance

Property Assets (inc. A&As)

- ▶ Year on Year Comparison
 - ▶ Q1: 2024/25 - 8
 - ▶ Q1: 2025/26 – 18
- ▶ Outcomes for Q1 2025/26
 - ▶ 3 – Blank
 - ▶ 10 – Upheld
 - ▶ 5 – Not Upheld
- ▶ Timeframes
 - ▶ 4.24 – Average working days to acknowledge
 - ▶ 11.06 - Average working days to respond (this figure is skewed slightly as all 11 responded to without an extension were on time)

Compliance (Big 7)

- ▶ Year on Year Comparison
 - ▶ Q1: 2024/25 - 62
 - ▶ Q1: 2025/26 – 30
- ▶ Outcomes for Q1 2025/26
 - ▶ 4 – Blank
 - ▶ 17 – Upheld
 - ▶ 8 – Not Upheld
 - ▶ 1 – Comment
- ▶ Timeframes
 - ▶ No acknowledgements registered
 - ▶ 12.33 - Average working days to respond (up on previous quarter)



Tenancy Services



- ▶ Year on Year Comparisons
 - ▶ Q1 2024/25 – 33
 - ▶ Q1 2025/26 – 27
- ▶ Outcomes for Q4
 - ▶ 12 – Upheld
 - ▶ 7 - Not Upheld
 - ▶ 6 - Not Considered to be a complaint
 - ▶ 2 – blank
- ▶ Timeframes
 - ▶ 2.67 days average to acknowledge (no acknowledgements recorded in previous quarter)
 - ▶ 8.76 days average to respond

Housing Solutions



- ▶ Year on Year Comparisons
 - ▶ Q1 2024/25 – 20
 - ▶ Q1 2025/26 – 10
- ▶ Outcomes for Q4
 - ▶ 1 – Upheld
 - ▶ 2 - Not Upheld
 - ▶ 7 - Not Considered to be a complaint
- ▶ Timeframes
 - ▶ 4.00 acknowledgements registered
 - ▶ 4.80 days average to respond

Q1 Stage 2 Housing Complaints



- ▶ Year on Year Comparisons
 - ▶ Q4 2024/25 – 17 S2 Complaints
 - ▶ Q4 2025/26 – 18 S2 Complaints Received
- ▶ Outcomes for Q4
 - ▶ 9 – Upheld
 - ▶ 6 - Not Upheld
 - ▶ 3 - Not Considered to be a complaint
- ▶ Timeframes
 - ▶ 1.83 average days to acknowledge
 - ▶ 16.39 average days to respond

Stage Two Themes



- ▶ Q1 saw complaints for ASB processes, Damp and Mould, Planned Works for Windows, Gas and Electric Compliance, as well as empty homes.
- ▶ All complaint themes are similar, continuing along the lines of a lack of communication between departments/tenants/contractors and a lack of action following the initial service request being received.
- ▶ We continue to fail to manage tenants' expectations due to the lack of communication following service requests and stage one complaints.
- ▶ It has also been noticed that teams not communicating at stage one, complaints submitted often involve multiple teams. Please remember to review the full timeline submitted and not just what relates to your team.

Compliments Q1



- ▶ “Just want to thank Babergh for the care the gardeners are taking in mowing the lawns this year at Gayford Court.”
- ▶ “Dan attended to repair a shower. Was very pleased with the service received. Repair was attended to quickly, Dan was competent, efficient and polite.”
- ▶ “I would like to however express my extreme gratitude to Stephenie and her co-worker for their never wavering kindness and support whilst I was trying to stay above the water. I will never forget the impact they had in my story. They are both amazing and deserve recognition.”
- ▶ “Dear Paulina We just wanted to say a heartfelt thank you for all your help and support throughout the purchase of our home. Your guidance and patience made such a difference during what can often be a stressful time, and we’re truly grateful for everything you did to help the process go smoothly. We really appreciated your clear communication and the way you represented Mid Suffolk District Council with such professionalism and kindness. It was a pleasure working with you.”

Housing Ombudsman Determination Q1



- ▶ The Housing Ombudsman investigated a complaint from our tenant about:
 - ▶ a. Concerns about a new lock in the front door of the property.
 - ▶ b. Request for a fence to be installed in the front garden.
 - ▶ c. Reports of damp and mould, and associated repairs within the property.
 - ▶ d. Associated complaint.
- ▶ The Housing Ombudsman determined:
 - ▶ In accordance with paragraph 53.b. of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme, the landlord has made an offer of redress prior to investigation which, in the Ombudsman's opinion, satisfactorily resolves its handling of the resident's concerns about the new lock in the front door of the property.
 - ▶ In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Scheme, there was service failure in the landlord's handling of the resident's request for a fence to be installed in the front garden.
 - ▶ In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Scheme, there was maladministration in the landlord's handling of the resident's reports of damp and mould, and associated repairs within the property.
 - ▶ In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Scheme, there was service failure in the landlord's handling of the resident's associated complaint.

Order and Recommendation



- ▶ Apologise to the resident in writing acknowledging the maladministration and service failure identified
- ▶ Pay £600 compensation for distress and inconvenience
- ▶ Carry out repairs to fans.
- ▶ Install new windows, insulation and front door.
- ▶ Share details of liability insurer.

Housing Ombudsman – Complaint Policy Review



- ▶ 13 Recommendations made including:
 - ▶ Using discretion where the complaints falls outside of the policy – 12 months example
 - ▶ Update all relevant exclusions within the policy
 - ▶ Making the policy available in accessible formats
 - ▶ Documenting in policy suitable intervals for communications with residents where responses fall outside of complaint timescales
 - ▶ Residents not being required to let us know why they want to escalate their complaint to stage 2

Regulator Updates



- ▶ Recent Judgements for Ipswich Borough Council – C3 [Ipswich Borough Council \(42UD\) - Regulatory Judgement: 30 July 2025 - GOV.UK](#)
- ▶ In respect of complaints handling, the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard requires landlords to provide accessible information to tenants about the types of complaints received and how they have learnt from complaints to continuously improve services. We saw evidence that Ipswich BC provides reports on complaints numbers, themes and lessons learned on a regular basis. Ipswich BC has made changes to improve its complaints handling process but recognises that further improvements are needed to the reporting of complaint handling for engaged tenants.

Learning from Complaints and Customer Satisfaction Feedback 2025

Business Area	Category	Trends	Learning	Planned Service Improvement	Action Taken
Housing Management	Staff Conduct	Lack of regular visits by Housing Managers	Customers are not aware of inspection programme.	> Review inspection programme across portfolios and identify any gaps > Raise awareness of inspection programme through communication channels, its purpose, gaps and frequency	
		Dissatisfaction that issues are not resolved following inspections, which impacts on customers understanding of their importance.	Understand the full position on the property before attending an inspection.	> Review the process for repair reporting following inspection across the regions. > Follow up on previous inspections at mid intervals and prior to next inspection.	> Havering WhatsApp group established to immediately raise repairs - consider this across the regions.
		Attitude of Housing Managers & Income Team towards tenants and tone of language used.	Customers to be treated with respect at all times.	> Social Housing Stigma campaign to be developed and implemented across all front line staff.	> All front line staff will completed Consumer Standards training in 2024
			Remembering that whilst we are carrying out inspections, we are entering people's homes. Customers to be advised of how to make a complaint.	> Share spotlight report with all housing staff. > Communication campaign on making a complaint in second half of 2025	> All customers who complete a survey for us are contacted for more detail, advised of involvement opportunities and advised of complaints process. > All staff have undergone complaint handling training
		Not providing a quality service	Not following up on concerns raised around antisocial behaviour or tenancy issues and keeping the customer updated.	> Revised service standards > Customers advised to make a complaint > Complaints and feedback to become regular part of performance management.	
	Poor Communication	Housing Managers not returning customer calls or emails.	Housing Managers to leave appropriate messages on their phones/emails when contact will be difficult.		
			Customers to be advised of alternative methods of contact i.e. use of branch. Customers unaware of service standards.	> Revise communication to customers on branch contact details > Full communication to tenants once signed off and consultation completed.	> Customer Experience Charter in draft and currently being reviewed by tenants.
		Receiving texts confirming appointments 24 hours before.	Notice is given of future appointment once inspection has been completed but then there are no other reminders until 24 hours before. Need to enhance this with IT.	> Review process with Housing staff and IT and make required improvements.	
	Finance	Not providing any other communication/notices before the rent is increased.	Customers do not always deal with Mears Living communication immediately and so advanced warning would be beneficial.	> Have communication plan on rent increase ready three months prior to information being sent to customers. > Regular finance section with customer newsletter. > Enhance rent section of website	
		Rent providing value for money where there are outstanding repairs or communal services failures	> Housing Managers picking up and raising communal issues through inspections/estate walkabouts.	> Review process around block/estate inspections.	
		High cost of electricity and failing to provide appropriate support/information.	> Understanding the impact high cost of electricity is having on customers. > Work proactively with partners and customers to reduce energy consumption and provide advice.	> Regular communication to tenants on energy consumption	

Lessons Learned Next Steps



- ▶ Outcome themes of complaints will be shared with HOS & Managers by team in advance of the Complaints Task Force Meeting
- ▶ Teams to identify service improvements or preventative actions taken to prevent reoccurring complaint themes and report back to James.
- ▶ New template will be populated and then published on website with Complaints Task Force meetings.
- ▶ Updates on actions taken to be provided at this meeting by service areas.

Complaint Scrutiny Update



- ▶ Two workshops held:
 - Online with 8 tenants and 7 staff members
 - In person with 8 tenants, 9 staff members
- ▶ Longlist of 43 recommendations divided into themes:
 - Communication
 - Professionalism
 - Integrity
 - Empathy
- ▶ Recommendations go to Tenant Board end August for approval and then O&S for ratification.
- ▶ Action Plan progressed





AOB