



## **Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report 2023/24**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code requires the Council to produce an annual 'Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report', which must then be reported to the landlord's governing body and published on the Council's website.
- 1.2 The Council adopted a new Corporate Complaints Policy, which applied from 01 April 2024. The new Policy meets the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code 2024.
- 1.3 This document focuses on the Council's Housing services. It does not reflect any complaint findings or analysis for the wider Council. The Housing service includes two key aspects: -
  - (a) statutory services provided by all Council's nationally (e.g. homelessness prevention/relief, temporary accommodation, waiting list allocations); and
  - (b) those services provided by Fareham Housing in the role of social housing landlord (e.g. tenancy services/management, maintenance/repairs, associated with circa 2,400 Council homes).
- 1.4 This report includes a qualitative assessment, thus allowing potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision to be identified, together with any further training requirements needed.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Of note is that the new Corporate Complaints Policy (2024) changed from the previous three stage complaint process (Stage 0, Stage 1, and Stage 2) which had operated in 2023/24, to a two-stage process (Stage 1 and Stage 2). This ensures the Council's complaint handling approach (from 01 April 2024) accords with the new Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code (2024).
- 2.2 The analysis in this report reflects the Council's previous complaint handling approach that operated in 2023/24.

## Appendix 1

### 3.0 2023/24 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

3.1 During 2023/24 36 housing related complaints were received.

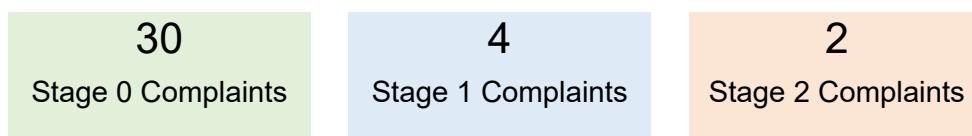


Figure 1: Complaints Received by Stage

#### Response Timeframes

3.2 During 2023/24 timeliness of complaint handling was as follows: -

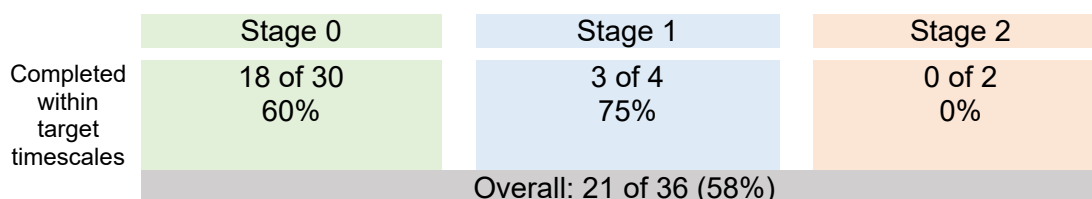


Figure 2: Timeliness of Complaint Responses

3.3 The target timescales for a response to complaints is 10 working days for Stage 1, and 20 working days for Stage 2.

3.4 It is acknowledged that the timeliness for complaint responses was poor in 2023/24. In many cases customers were advised when there would be a delayed response. Significant staffing issues and changes during 2023/24 regrettably impacted the timeliness of complaint responses.

3.5 Quarter 1 performance for 2024/25 has been monitored by the Housing Management Team. This has shown that across Fareham Housing, of the complaints received during Q1 of 2024/25, over 85% have been responded to within the target timescales. This shows a marked improvement developing in comparison with 2023/24.

3.6 The table below provides an overview of whether complaints were upheld, partly upheld, or not upheld.

Upheld	4 (11%)
Partly Upheld	15 (42%)
Not Upheld	14 (39%)
N/A (non-housing, or unable to contact complainant)	3 (8%)

#### Complaints Excluded (Refused to Accept)

3.6 During 2023/24 no complaints were excluded from consideration.

#### Complaints to the Ombudsman

3.7 During 2023/24 no new investigations were opened by the Housing Ombudsman (or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman) relating to housing matters.

#### Ombudsman Findings (including non-compliance with the Code)

3.8 There are currently no Ombudsman Findings in relation to the Code or individual complaint handling for Fareham Housing.

## Appendix 1

- 3.9 In 2022/23 the Housing Ombudsman produced individual landlord performance reports for those landlords with 5 or more 'findings' determined in that year. As Fareham Housing had zero reported findings in 2022/23, there is no individual landlord performance report from the Housing Ombudsman relating to Fareham Borough Council.
- 3.10 The last 'finding' from the Housing Ombudsman relating to Fareham Borough Council was dated 15 September 2021. No maladministration by Fareham Housing (the landlord) was found. The full report is available [here](#)

### **Unreasonable Complaint Behaviour decisions**

- 3.11 During 2023/24 no Fareham Housing customers were deemed to trigger the need to utilise the Council's Unreasonable Complaint Behaviour Policy.

## **4.0 OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS**

### *Qualitative Analysis*

- 4.1 The below provides a headline summary of the areas of complaint during 2023/24. This does not reflect whether the matter of complaint was upheld. Any numbers in brackets indicate the frequency of complaint on similar issues.

- Unhappy with advice given (7)
- Officer conduct (5)
- Neighbour disputes (3)
- Repair matters (3)
- Alleged confidentiality breach (2)
- Harassment/ASB not addressed satisfactorily (2)
- Unhappy with level of contact from Officer (2)
- Homelessness application delays/issues (2)
- Overcrowded temporary accommodation (2)
- Mould/Damp related issues (2)
- Contractor conduct
- Unhappy with recharges
- Rent Arrears
- Alleged discrimination
- Vermin issue not adequately addressed
- Information available on website
- Lack of financial support for flooring
- Privacy in sheltered housing
- Snagging with new build
- Property image used in tenant newsletter

## **5.0 LEARNINGS / SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS**

- 5.0 In addition to apologies and corrective measures (remedies) being actioned following individual complaint investigations, the following wider learnings and improvements have been identified. This is not intended to be detailed to avoid case/individual identification.

- Improvement required in timeliness for complaint handling, against target timescales (*see 3.5 of this report*)

## Appendix 1

- Positive culture to complaints; better to invite and know about issues, so we can improve (*ongoing*)
- Complaint training for complaint handlers (*training took place in Apr 2024, further training to be considered*).
- Improved management and corporate oversight of complaints (*ongoing*)
- Improved staff awareness/refresher training on data protection matters (*ongoing*)
- Discussions with individual staff/training when appropriate (*ongoing*)
- Ensure staff are aware of all referral channels/opportunities (*ongoing*)
- Complaint awareness for all staff, including ensuring that any expression of dissatisfaction is progressed as a complaint, recognising requirements of 2024 Ombudsman Code (*all-staff briefing in January 2024*)

5.2 Many of the service improvements have already been recognised, and actions undertaken and/or planned. An improved approach and culture to complaint handling is beginning to embed in the Housing Service. Staff training has taken place, and as referred to in 3.5 of this report, a significant improvement to the complaint response timescales is already being noted for 2024/25.