



People & Communities Matter

2023-24 Annual Complaints Performance and service improvement Report

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1. Overview and context:

1. 1.1 Since 2020, The Housing Ombudsman Service, among other landlord regulation, has prescribed new requirements to ensure we respond effectively and fairly to complaints. These are defined in their Complaint Handling Code. The purpose of the Code is to enable landlords to resolve complaints raised by residents quickly and use the data and learning from complaints to drive service improvements.
2. 1.2 The Complaint Handling Code aims to achieve best practice in complaint handling, to provide a better service to residents and drive a positive complaint handling culture.
3. 1.3 From 1 April 2024, the Code became statutory meaning that member landlords are obliged by law to follow its requirements.
4. 1.4 The Housing Service must also report on performance, using accurate data, to drive learning and continuous service improvements, that improve landlord and tenant relations.
5. 1.5 If the Ombudsman decides that the housing service has not handled a complaint in accordance with the code, and our procedure, then the service risks the issue of a Complaint Handling Failure Order (CHFO), for maladministration, and the Ombudsman will order the Service to put things right and ensure compliance with the code. The Ombudsman publishes a report on

CHFOs quarterly, and the Housing Service will be inspected by the Regulator every four years.

2. 2023/24 Annual Self-assessment

2.1 We are required to publish a mandatory baseline self-assessment of our Housing Complaints Policy against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code to ensure that it remains in line with their requirements. This year the Housing Ombudsman's updated the Code with some additional content and clarity that needed to be added to our Housing Complaints Policy, and following the assessment, we have made changes so that we are fully compliant.

The Self-assessment - Complaint Handling Code 2024 - Housing Ombudsman and Housing Services Complaints & Enquires Standard 2022 can be found at:

<http://crofthousing.org.uk>

2.2 We have summarised below the observations and changes identified that need to be made.

- **Section 1: Definition of a complaint**

We are fully compliant with this section which refers to recognising and defining a complaint.

- **Section 2: Exclusions**

We are fully compliant with this section which is about the decision to not accept a complaint.

- **Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness**

We are in the process of building our website and a Complaints page is being created as a priority. Our Complaints Policy, Complaints Self-Assessment and Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report will be uploaded as soon as the Complaints section of our website is completed to ensure that we are fully compliant.

We have trained our staff to understand that high volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well- publicised and accessible complaints process.

- **Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff**

We are fully compliant with this section.

The Housing Manager is the named Complaint Handling staff within the organisation.

- **Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process**

We are fully compliant with this section.

- **Section 6: Complaints Stages**

We are fully compliant with this section.

- **Stage 2**

We have reviewed our Complaints Policy and are fully compliant.

- **Section 8: Putting things right**

We have reviewed our Complaints Policy and are fully compliant.

We consider that the following points are not applicable this year as we have not had any instances:

1. Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.
2. If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website. Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.

3. Tenancy Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

3.1 The Tenant Satisfaction Measures Standard requires all registered providers to generate and report tenant satisfaction measures (TSMs) as specified by the regulator. The central aims of the TSMs are to provide tenants with greater transparency about their landlord's performance and inform the regulator about how a landlord is complying with consumer standards.

3.2 We were required to provide TSMs generated from management information for housing complaints data for the full period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. This produced the following:

TSM measure CH01 Complaints relative to the size of the landlord (based on housing stock of 337) as follows:

- 1) 0 Stage 1 complaints per 1000 homes
- 2) 0 Stage 2 complaints per 1000 homes

TSM measure CH02 Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales as follows:

- 1) 100% Stage 1 responses responded within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescale.
- 2) 100% Stage 2 responses responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescale.

4. Analysis of our complaint handling performance 2023-2024

4.1 The Housing Ombudsman requires that landlords have a person assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). Their Complaint Handling Code refers to that person or team as the ‘complaints officer.’

4.2 Since September 2024 we have an established complaint handler who administers all housing complaints, responsible for ensuring timely contact with the customer to acknowledge and respond to the complaint, requesting and tracking the investigation, and monitoring and reporting on complaint types, outcomes and learnings, themes, and trends.

4.3 For the purposes of this Annual Report we have provided detailed data and analysis from the 1st September 2023 to 31st March 2024.

4.4 CHA's Complaints Policy was reviewed during the second half of 2024 and new recording and monitoring systems were introduced at the same time. Staff have been trained with the new policy and understand what constitutes a complaint and that it can be seen as a positive and an opportunity to improve services.

4.5 CHA provides temporary accommodation and the average length of stay often means that tenants don't have the opportunity to complain.

5. Stage 1 complaints

5.1 The following table shows the number of contacts/complaints received from tenants, all except one (fire in property) were dealt with within 10 days. Due to the lack of complaints received, we decided to use repair requests as type of “complaint”. This explains the large number in the repairs & maintenance column. However, the Housing Ombudsman has advised not to use repair requests for future reports, only to use repairs as a complaint if a resident is unhappy with the repair or repair time frame and has made a complaint about the service they have received:

	Voids & Allocations	Housing Revenue	N'hood & Tenancy	Repairs & Maint.	Total
Total Received	0	0	0	296	296
% Responded within 10 days	N/A	N/A	N/A	288	288
% Responded within 10-20 days	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
% Responded over 20 days	N/A	N/A	N/A	8	8
Total upheld/partly upheld	N/A	N/A	N/A	296	296
Our staff have been rude	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Processes or policies have not been followed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Significant delay in providing a service	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
We have failed to deliver a service	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
We have made a mistake in the way we provided a service	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
We have not listened properly	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

5.6 All requests/complaints were accepted.

5.7 97% of complaints were responded to within 10 working days timescale that is stipulated by the Ombudsman and the Regulator. One incident representing 3% of the total number of complaints went beyond 20 days because of the complexity of the repairs required.

6. Stage 2 Complaints

6.1 No complaints were escalated to Stage 2.

7. Learning from Complaints

7.1 The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code states that we must look beyond the circumstances of an individual complaint and consider whether service improvements because of the issues raised. A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.

7.2 This last quarter has been focused on changing the organisation's culture with regards to recording and handling complaints. We don't expect many complaints due to the clients group we are working with and the temporary nature of their stay with us, but we are hoping to capture many more during 2024/25 and more still during 2025/26.

7.3 We will record complaints and link them to learning outcome types as follows:

Learning Type

- Feedback for contractors
- Improve Communication
- Individual Training & Development
- Process Improvement
- System Improvement
- Team Training & Development

8. Ombudsman: Landlord Performance Reports and Interventions

8.1 There were no Individual landlord performance reports for 2023-24 for Croft HA.

8.2 There were no intervention from the Housing Ombudsman resulting in a determination.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report to be approved.