

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out a review of annual complaints performance and service improvement. The format of the report is aligned to the headings of the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) Complaint Handling Code (the Code) Section 8.1 parts a to f, using each part as a heading, for ease <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/complaint-handling-code/the-code-2024/>

2 Annual self-assessment against the Code to ensure the complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements (8.1a)

- 2.1 We have completed the Housing Ombudsman service (HOS) self - assessment against the Complaint Handling Code. In parallel we have completed a review of our Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedure documents to ensure compliance with the requirements of the new Code.

3 Quantitative analysis of our complaint handling performance (8.1b)

3.1 Summary of complaints 2023/24:

Table 1: Formal Complaints logged at either Stage 1 or Stage 2 between April 2023 to March 2024

Formal complaints received 2023/2024	
Formal Complaints carried over from 2022/23	6
April 2023 to March 2024 - Complaints Logged	56
Combined total carried over and logged April 2023 to March 2024	62
Complaints Closed Down (<i>including those carried over from 2022/23</i>)	54
Complaints not closed down and carried forward to 2024/25	8
- Under investigation & still within response timeframe - Under investigation with an extension to timeframe agreed by complainant	
Formal Complaints referred to the Housing Ombudsman	0
Formal Complaints Refused	0

Table 2: Complaints logged at either Stage 1 or Stage 2 between April 2023 to March 2024

	Stage 1	Stage 2
Q1 April to June	10	1
Q2 July to Sept	10	2
Q3 Oct to Dec	10	2
Q4 Jan to March	16	5
Total	46	10

We aim to deal with all Formal Complaints within the following timescales:

- Stage 1 Formal Complaints = 10 full working days
- Stage 2 Formal Complaints = 20 full working days

Table 3: Complaints closed down and responded to within our published timescales between April 2023 to March 2024.

	Stage 1	Stage 2
Q1 April to June	7	-
Q2 July to Sept	4	-
Q3 Oct to Dec	8	2
Q4 Jan to March	14	3
Total	33	5

this also includes the Formal Complaints carried over from the previous reporting year 2022/23

Table 4: Complaints closed down and **not** responded to within our published timescales between April 2023 and March 2024*

	Stage 1	Stage 2
Q1 April to June	5	2
Q2 July to Sept	3	2
Q3 Oct to Dec	2	-
Q4 Jan to March	2	-
Total	12	4

this also includes the Formal Complaints carried over from the previous reporting year 2022/23

Table 5: Complaints reported as per Tenant Satisfaction Measures Technical Guidelines (complaints from EHA tenants)

	Complaints Logged	Responded within Complaint Handling Code Timescales
Stage 1	41	31
Stage 2	9	4

Table 6: Closed complaints - Upheld, Partially Upheld or Not Upheld

		Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld
Q1 April to June	Stage 1	6	1	5
	Stage 2	2		
Q2 July to Sept	Stage 1	6	1	
	Stage 2	2		
Q3 Oct to	Stage 1	4	2	4
	Stage 2	1		1
Q4 Jan to March	Stage 1	15	1	
	Stage 2	2	1	
	Total	38	6	10

Table 7: Reasons for complaints logged 2023/24

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
Staffing - Customer Service/Communications	1		1
Reasonable Adjustments			
Compliance Gas	1		1
Compliance Electric			
Compliance Solid Fuel	2		2
Compliance Smoke Alarm			
General Repairs – Day to Day	16	3	19
Contractor installation		1	1
Leaseholder Repairs	1	1	2
Recharges			
Planned Maintenance	2		2
Grounds Maintenance			
Allocations/Choice Based Lettings/Mutual Exchange	2		2
Tenancy – Anti Social Behaviour			
Tenancy – Estate Management	1		1
Tenancy – Rent Arrears			
Disabled Adaptations			
Right to Buy/Right to Acquire/Shared Ownership			
Property Acquisition - dispute over flooring	1		1
Housing Options - Homelessness	3		3
Access to EHA via My Account our digital platform			
Decant – temporary move whilst works are carried out at your home			
Dissatisfaction with our Contractors			

Void Repairs – (works carried out before you move into your new home)	2		2
Gas – Day to Day	2		2
Damp and Mould	2		2
Disrepair Claim	2		2
Progress – Out of Hours Service	1	1	2
Garages			
Requesting compensation as complaint not dealt with to satisfaction at Stage 1		2	2
Warm Front – Sustainability	1		1
General Management of Schemes	1		1
Items disposed of without permission	1		1
Damage to possessions during repairs	1		1
Reimbursing utilities of items post fire	1		1
Management of possessions following fire	1	1	2
Allocation of Garages	1		1
Compensation level missing possessions		1	1
Total	46	10	56

3.2 Quarterly Overview

Q1 April to June 2023

- 6 x Formal Complaint carried over from previous reporting year
- 11 x Formal Complaints logged during this quarter
- 14 x Formal Complaints closed down during this quarter
- 3 x Formal Complaints carried over into the next quarter

Q2 July to September 2023

- 3 x Formal Complaint carried over from previous reporting quarter
- 12 x Formal Complaints logged during this quarter
- 9 x Formal Complaints closed down during this quarter
- 6 x Formal Complaints carried over into the next quarter

Q3 Oct to Dec 2023

- 3 x Formal Complaint carried over from previous reporting quarter
- 12 x Formal Complaints logged during this quarter
- 12 x Formal Complaints closed down this quarter
- 3 x Formal Complaints carried over into the next quarter

Q4 Jan to March 2024

- 3 x Formal Complaint carried over from previous reporting quarter

- 21 x Formal Complaints logged during this quarter
- 9 x Formal Complaints closed down this quarter
- 8 x Formal Complaints carried over into the next reporting year

4 Qualitative analysis of our complaint handling performance (8.1b)

- 4.1 Providing excellent customer service is one of our main objectives and we see the effective handling of complaints as a key element of our Customer Strategy and a means of monitoring, maintaining and improving the level and quality of the services we deliver.
- 4.2 We recognise the need to comply with the HOS Complaints Handling Code and the benefits that listening, reflecting, learning and self-assessment brings to maintaining positive relationships with our tenants and leaseholders. We also recognise the need to comply with other key areas of regulation.
- 4.3 The Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standard 'Tenant Involvement and Empowerment' states "...a registered provider shall have an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and ensures that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly'.
- 4.4 We believe that our positive complaints handling approach ensures that we will;
- ✓ Display positive behaviours, in-line with our organisational Values, by forging lasting relationships with all those who use our services- based on trust, openness and transparency
 - ✓ Develop our existing teams as well as providing opportunities for new colleagues to learn and grow from within
 - ✓ Be compliant with all relevant legislation including the Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code and the Regulator's Consumer Standards
 - ✓ Promote a working environment where colleagues are confident to 'own' where mistakes have been made; and we are agile enough to adapt to changes to the landscape in which we operate
- 4.5 In order for this strategy to be successful it is a priority for us to work collaboratively between internal teams, so that we are consistent in our approach, and that customers feel valued and listened to.
- 4.6 In March 2024 we completed a review of the Values of our organisation, involving our staff and tenants to identify what was most important to them. Being customer centric in all that we do scored the highest in terms of responses. We have an Away Day for all staff in July 2024 to celebrate and embed our Values and what this means for colleagues in the delivery of our services.

- 4.7 We believe that together this approach allows us to provide excellence by embedding a positive complaint handling culture.
- 4.8 To allow us to do this we need the correct resources in place. In November 2023 we recruited to the role of Complaints Officer, a role dedicated to managing Stage 1 complaints and providing a valuable resource to work alongside key staff and managers at every level.
- 4.9 The Complaints Officer role allows us to prioritise complaint handling and ensure consistency, compliance, recording and monitoring of relevant processes, working collaboratively with service managers to identify learning and outcomes and implement relevant changes in service delivery.
- 4.10 From November 2023 we have been able to carry out a review of;
- ✓ the way we handle complaints, including our processes
 - ✓ staff knowledge and levels of experience
 - ✓ our communication with our customers including identifying need and vulnerabilities
 - ✓ our recording and how we record accurate case management and learning outcomes
- 4.11 From this review we put together a complaints action plan to capture and manage pieces of work and projects where we have identified the need for improvement. Some of the areas identified have been implemented within teams and across the organisation, others are planned in as they will take longer to complete. Information on this work is detailed in section 8.1e of this Report.
- 4.12 Intelligence captured from complaints between April 2023 and March 2024 include the following common themes for improvement;
- Communicating with and updating our customer
 - Completing repairs first time
 - Accurate recording of information relating to repairs
 - Communication between internal departments and teams, for example between customer advisors, housing teams, repairs and compliance and finance
 - Communicating with contractors and managing contractor performance
 - Listening to customers and seeking to understand
 - Identifying customer needs and vulnerability
- 4.13 Following the review, we implemented changes to address the common themes identified including individual staff training and company wide communication sessions (known as CHAT sessions). This was a series of 5 half hour sessions including information on the role of the Housing Ombudsman and the changes being introduced by the new Code (also recorded for use in new colleague inductions), as well as department specific interventions.

- 4.14 Between November 2023 and February 2024 we delivered a series of training and workshop sessions with the customer advisor team on our formal complaints process, agreeing strategies and ways to communicate effectively with customers and internal colleagues. This included effective listening and managing customer expectations and how effective communication contributes to improved levels of customer satisfaction.
- 4.15 In January 2024 we started a pilot using a complaints dashboard in order for the Complaints Officer to prioritise complaints, from initial contact and investigation to response, based on customer needs. Early observations show improvements in response times and positive feedback from customers and the pilot will be reviewed during 2024.

4.16 Examples of feedback:

I'm happy to accept your formal offer of £100 compensation for the inconvenience caused and appreciate the sincerity and professionalism demonstrated during this complaint process.

As stated my complaint relates wholly to the issues raised and not to any member of Eden Housing staff. We have always found the teams at Eden considerate and professional in any communication especially those who deal directly with tenant matters or any issues we may have had. As always, we have full confidence in your front line teams in resolving any problems.

Thankyou so much for your emails. I received a call today regarding the work being completed and an appointment was booked for next Wednesday afternoon. Thankyou for all your assistance on the matter.

***** said she is very pleased with both the outcome and the way in which she was treated, and that we have listened to her complaint and acted on it.*

Table 8 : Learning outcomes by complaint reference & actions taken to respond to shortfall in service delivery

Complaint Ref Number	Learning Outcomes	Actions taken to address shortfall or share best practice
830585	Improved communication is required between internal teams including Repairs and Maintenance, Housing Management and Customer Advisors	• Communication sessions with Customer Advisors • Housing 2024 CHAT sessions x 5 • Review of resources and structure

	Overdue repairs not always highlighted and addressed	
830819	Contractor management and improved responses to damp and mould	• Dedicated damp & mould resource/ co-ordinator.
837294 & 848525	Better at identifying vulnerability	• Staff training with customer advisors completed. • Piloting complaints Dashboard- identifies customer need. • IT changes requested and process mapping underway
837802	Clearer communication needed with our tenants at first contact	• Staff training completed.
838026 & 848349	Better communication needed within repairs and maintenance to escalate priority jobs. Leaseholder Policy review needed.	• Restructure of service area. • Leaseholder Policy being reviewed.
848041	Improved communication between contractor and tenant	• Feedback given and discussed with contractor at performance meeting.
848349	Improved communication between repairs & maintenance and contractors. Adherence to policies.	• Re-structure of service area.
851702	Better communication between asset and contractor to keep customer updated.	• Staff training and feedback meeting with contractor.
851957	Recording of information on Orchard and the need to improve updating our tenant.	• Re-structure of service area. • Managers staff to refer and use learning from Housing Ombudsman's KIM spotlight report
852482	Improved use of Orchard to raise and update jobs, and communication with our tenant.	• Re-structure of service area.

4.17 The majority of our complaints are about repairs and maintenance. There is an ongoing restructure of the repairs, maintenance and asset teams to improve resources, communication and performance and this area is the biggest single area of focus for us.

- 4.18 In addition to the operational learning outcomes we are also assessing our IT systems to identify changes to improve functionality and the capturing of information relating to our customers, their service requests and our internal communication. This and other completed and planned work is captured within the complaints workplan.

5 Any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the HOS (8.1c)

- 5.1 There are no findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman. Case recommendations made by the Ombudsman are included within part 8.f of this report.

6 The service improvements made as the result of learning from complaints (8.1d)

- 6.1 Examples of improvements made as the result of learning from complaints are also included within the 'Qualitative analysis' in section 8.1b above.
- 6.2 In addition to the review of the repairs, maintenance and asset functions we have identified the following improvements which are either completed or are planned, some of which are also mentioned above:

Improvement	Improvement Aims	Notes
Policy and Procedure review	to improve customer experience and adhere to the new Code	Completed June 2024
Recruiting of a Complaints Officer	a dedicated resource to ensure consistency and compliance as well as providing advice to colleagues, capturing learning outcomes and embedding a positive complaints culture across the organisation	Completed Nov 2023
Embedding the role of the Complaints Officer	to include interaction with wider organisation to embed consistency and further develop a positive complaints culture	In Progress/ Ongoing
Suite of complaints correspondence letters	to improve communication with customers and adhere to the new Code	Completed April 2023
Review of Compensation Policy	to reflect inflation and impact of stress and inconvenience	In Progress

	from service failure and levels of discretionary and 'goodwill' compensation	To be completed July 2024
Complaints satisfaction survey review	to improve communication and participation with customers and the capture of learning outcomes	In Progress to be completed August 2024
Introduction of a damp and mould co-ordinator	This is a new role as an addition to an existing role acting as a single point of contact to co-ordinate our response and approach to issues associated with damp and mould	Completed Aug 2023
Review of internal IT systems	to improve communication, customer communication, knowledge of our customers and performance reporting	In Progress/ Ongoing
Customer Advisor Training	To improve knowledge of effective communication and gain a shared understanding of our positive approach to complaint handling	Completed February 2024
Wider team training on complaints approach and effective communication – In Progress	To improve knowledge of effective communication and gain a shared understanding of our positive approach to complaint handling	In Progress - to be complete Dec 2024 then refresher built into our annual complaints training
Away Day for all staff	to celebrate and embed organisational Values which will contribute to embedding a positive complaints culture	In Progress – Planned for July 2024
Carry out quarterly case reviews	to ensure compliance with the Policy and associated documents	Quarterly Ongoing
Include “year on year” complaints comparison data	to be included within the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvements report	Annually

7 Any Annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman (8.1e)

- 7.1 The HOS are committed to openness and transparency. An important part of this is using data to provide residents with information, insight and learning for landlords to improve their services. The HOS publish individual landlord performance reports for landlords with 5 or more

findings. As of June 2024 Eden Housing Association has not had a landlord performance report published.

8 Any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord (8.1f)

- 8.1 An Eden Housing Association Formal Complaint which had exhausted our internal complaints process was referred to the Housing Ombudsman in 2021/22. In April 2022 we received notification from the HOS that they would be investigating the complaint.
- 8.2 Although the referral of this complaint fell outside of the current reporting year, the HOS decision letter/ investigation report was received in June 2023. The decision letter/ investigation report included:
- orders for completion within four weeks
 - orders for completion within eight weeks
 - recommendations
- 8.3 All of the above were implemented and confirmation of their completion sent to the HOS. Full details of the HOS decisions/ investigation were shared and discussed with Staff, Complaints Panel and Board Members to ensure ongoing learning and prevention of re-occurrence

*Report Prepared June 2024 by
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