



REPORT TO:	Cllr T Carter, Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing
REPORT OF:	Jason King, Assistant Director - Housing
REPORT AUTHOR:	Sam Dicker, Business Support Manager
SUBJECT:	Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2023/24.
PURPOSE:	To provide an overview of the complaints received during 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 for services within the Housing Revenue Account. The Councils performance against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, in the form of the Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report.
KEY DECISION:	No
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All Wards
EXEMPT REPORT?	No

SUMMARY

The report provides an overview of the complaints received during 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, for services within the Housing Revenue Account. The Councils performance against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, in the form of the Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing in their capacity as Member responsible for Complaints ('MRCs'):

1. Approve the Councils annual complaints performance and service improvement report for 2023/24 as contained at Appendix 1.
2. Approve the response to the annual complaints and performance and service improvement report for 2023/24 as contained in Appendix 1 as the formal response from the Councils 'governing body' as required by the Code.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

It is a statutory requirement that the Council complies with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and the requirement to provide an annual submission, including an Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report and annual self-assessment.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

If the Council does not complete its annual submission, a complaint handling failure order may be issued. If the Council fails to comply with this order a referral may be made to the governing body or Regulator of Social Housing. **Not recommended.**

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 empowered the Housing Ombudsman to issue a code of practice about the procedures members of the Scheme should have in place for considering complaints.
- 1.2 Following a period of consultation, the Complaint Handling Code ('the Code') became a statutory requirement from the 1 April 2024, with the Housing Ombudsman having a duty to monitor compliance with the Code.
- 1.3 In addition, The Regulator of Social Housing has, after a period of consultation published its revised set of consumer standards to deliver a 'well-governed social housing sector' which provides quality homes and services for tenants. The four revised standards are effective from the 1 April 2024 and all Registered Providers are expected to meet these standards.
- 1.4 The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard requires all Registered Providers to ensure complaints are addressed fairly, effectively and promptly. The Council also needs to demonstrate that there is sufficient information for tenants to make complaints. The Council also needs to demonstrate what lessons are being learnt from complaints to enable continuous improvement.
- 1.5 The Housing Ombudsman intends to monitor compliance with the Code by way of annual submission. This ensures all landlords provide information in a consistent way that allows effective analysis and insight into compliance with the Code. Submission of documents should be considered alongside the submission of evidence to the Regulator of Social Housing.
- 1.6 The Annual Submission, whilst not in a prescribed format must include the following:
 - The self-assessment against the Code.
 - The Annual Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report.
 - The governing body's response to the report.
 - The complaints policy.

Alongside submission to the Ombudsman, all the details must be published on the Councils website.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The Report, which is attached at Appendix 1 provides analysis of the complaints and compliments received by services operated within the Housing Revenue Account for the period 1 April 2023 to the 31 April 2024.

2.2 This report seeks to provide information on the performance of our complaint handling, within the HRA, in terms of the volume and timeliness of responses. In addition, the report seeks to identify themes and lessons learnt that drive service improvement.

2.3 Additionally, the self-assessment is annexed to this report. The report provides an explanation of the Council's performance against the Housing Ombudsman's Code. It also notes the performance against the Councils own Housing Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy.

2.4 In summary the Councils services within the Housing Revenue Account received the following complaints

- 13 compliments
- 37 Stage one Complaints
- 0 Stage two Complaints
- 3 Housing Ombudsman cases

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 It is a statutory requirement that the Council complies with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and its requirements to provide an annual submission. This should include an Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report and annual self-assessment.

4. EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

4.1 The Council will be compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Code; tenants will be informed and able to voice concerns where necessary and hold the landlord to account.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL'S PARTNERSHIP

5.1.1 None.

5.2 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5.2.1 None.

5.3 STAFFING

5.3.1 None.

5.4 WORKFORCE CAPACITY IMPLICATIONS

5.4.1 None.

5.5 CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.5.1 None.

5.6 DATA PROTECTION

5.6.1 None.

5.7 FINANCIAL

5.7.1 None.

5.8 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.8.1 None.

5.9 STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

5.9.1 Consultation has taken place with:

- Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing

5.10 REPUTATION

5.10.1 None.

5.11 CONTRACTS

5.11.1 None.

5.12 CRIME AND DISORDER

5.12.1 None.

5.13 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

5.13.1 None.

5.14 HEALTH AND WELL BEING

5.14.1 None.

5.15 CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

5.15.1 None.

5.16 LINKS TO 12 MISSIONS IN THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

5.16.1 None.

6. ACRONYMS

6.1 None.

APPENDICES

Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report Appendix 1 (attached separately).

Housing Ombudsman Self-Assessment 2024 Appendix 2 (attached separately)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
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Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code April 2024	https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/complaint-handling-code/the-code-2024/
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CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body.

REPORT APPROVAL

Report author:	Sam Dicker sdicker@sholland.gov.uk
Signed off by:	Assistant Director - Housing Jason.king@sholland.gov.uk
Approved for publication:	CLlr Tracey Carter, Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing