



Report To: Policy Development Panel

Date: 03/02/26

Subject: SHDC Housing Comments, Compliments, Complaints and Compensation Policy

Purpose: To approve amendments to SHDC Housing Comments, Compliments, Complaints and Compensation policy following an annual refresh with tenants

Key Decision: NA

Portfolio Holder: Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing

Report Of: Vikki Cherry, Assistant Director – Housing

Report Author: Beverley Chapman, Tenant Engagement and Influence Lead

Ward(s) Affected: All

Exempt Report: No

Summary

Our Housing Comments, Compliments, Complaints and Compensation Policy has been developed to ensure that all tenants are treated fairly and that any issues or dissatisfaction with the services are addressed promptly and effectively and that all concerns receive a response and resolution. The policy also aligns with legal and regulatory requirements of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

This report is to highlight the amendments made to the Housing Services Housing Comments, Compliments, Complaints and Compensation Policy which was reviewed in conjunction with tenants to ensure it meets the Housing Ombudsman Code of Practice and the tenants voice is prominent throughout the Policy.

Recommendations

That Policy Development Panel provides feedback on the Housing Comments, Compliments, Complaints and Compensation Policy.

That Policy Development Panel recommends adoption of the Housing Comments, Compliments, Complaints and Compensation Policy to Cabinet.

Reasons for Recommendations

To ensure the Housing Landlord Services are compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Code of Practice and the Regulator of Social Housing requirements.

Other Options Considered

Do nothing. Not to review the policy. This option is not recommended as it would leave us with a policy that does not recognise the tenant's voice. The Regulator of Social Housing has been in force April 1, 2024, and they expect all landlords to be accountable to tenants, addressing complaints fairly, effectively and promptly to build trust with tenants and put tenants' views at the heart of decision-making about the delivery of landlord services.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code became statutory on 1 April 2024, meaning that social landlords are obliged by law to follow its requirements. In addition, social landlords also have to ensure compliance with the complaints section within the Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.
- 1.2 The current Policy was developed and approved in March 2024. The policy has been updated following adoption of the Tenant Engagement and Influence Strategy. The policy has also been updated to reflect revisions to staffing structures and changes in approach to monitoring of Housing Complaints.

2. Report

- 2.1 To bring the Housing Comments, Compliments, Complaints and Compensation Policy up to date and ensure that tenant voice was heard, the policy was reviewed with tenants at a Complaints and Performance Focus Group in November 2025.
- 2.2 Tenants were provided copies of both the current Policy and the Housing Ombudsman Code and compared the two documents to ensure that all requirements were included in the Policy. This comparison highlighted that the Policy included all the necessary parts of the code.
- 2.3 In addition, tenants were then asked to share their thoughts on the policy, and changes they thought should be made to make the policy more robust. Tenants asked for the following changes:
 - Tenants voice to be prominent throughout the policy, requesting additions of the Focus Group as a means of scrutiny.
 - Transparency of the process to be highlighted to make sure all complaints were investigated fairly and consistently.
 - Re-ordering of the policy to enable it to flow better for those reading it.
 - Addition of a timeline of the process.

- Requested that Senior Officers and Team Leaders investigated Stage 1 complaints and that Senior Managers including Assistant Director for Housing investigate Stage 2 complaints. This way those closer to the operational work would be able to identify errors more consistently, implement changes and ensure they were successful.
- A review date for the policy should be added.

2.4 Tenants were content with how compensation was awarded and suggested no changes.

2.5 In addition, officers have reviewed the policy to maintain its effectiveness, updated job titles after SELCP restructures, and ensured ongoing compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Code.

2.6 Appendix 2 provides a summary of changes made.

3. Conclusion

3.1. Working with the tenants to review the Policy has led to a strong voice for the tenant being prominent throughout the policy, whilst maintaining compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Code of Practice.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

None

Corporate Priorities

The Policy will support the following Corporate Priority:

- *Our Council - Continue to ensure that our regulatory and statutory services remain fully compliant with all current and emerging legislation.*
- *Your Home – We will be a landlord of choice for our council housing tenants. Delivery of the Policies set out how we will make improvements to our service and take on board the views of our tenants.*

Staffing

None

Workforce Capacity Implications

None

Constitutional and Legal Implications

These documents do not form part of the major Policy Framework and can be approved by Cabinet.

The Housing Ombudsman Scheme is approved by the Secretary of State under section 51 of the Housing Act 1996. Local housing authorities in England which are registered providers of social housing must be members of the scheme. This policy supports compliance and mitigates the risk of complaint handling failure orders and/or financial penalties.

The Housing Complaints Working Group meets quarterly to review trends and analysis of complaints and information regarding benchmarked Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints. Attended by the Assistant Director for Housing, Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing, Information Manager and Data Protection Officer, Service Leads, Complaints Co-Ordinator and the Tenant Influence and Engagement Lead, this Group serves to ensure that all complaints have oversight from all relevant sections of the Council. It also holds Service leads to account in their role as investigating officers.

On 14th February 2023, Cabinet approved that the Assistant Director – Housing has authority to authorise payment of compensation in connection with complaints regarding the Council's function as a social landlord of up to £1,000 in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing.

Data Protection

None

Financial

None

Risk Management

None

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

Consultation was undertaken with tenants on 05 November 2025 who reviewed the policy as part of our engagement offer.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing, Director for Communities and Information Manager and Data Protection Officer have been consulted.

Reputation

Ongoing reviews of policies reduces the risk of reputational damage caused by enforcement from the Social Housing Regulator and/or the Housing Ombudsman (of which is published on the Ombudsman's website and social media channels).

Contracts

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

The Council is committed to treating everyone fairly and shall ensure that it complies with the Equality Act 2010. The document is accessible to all.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and does not identify any potential Public Sector Equality Duty issues. Documents have been designed to be fully inclusive regardless of the ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religious belief, or disability of service users or residents.

The Policy makes reference to reasonable adjustments taken to accommodate a person's needs.

Where we identify, or a customer advises us of, a vulnerability we make reasonable adjustments to our services accordingly to meet the needs of those individuals. This may include altering the way we communicate with a customer to adjusting the service that we offer to that person. Each case will be judged on its individual merits to avoid a one size fits all approach.

Health and Wellbeing

None

Climate Change and Environment Impact Assessment

Not undertaken.

Acronyms

None

Appendices

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report:

Appendix 1	Housing Complaints Policy
Appendix 2	Summary of changes to the Policy
Appendix 3	Equality Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Document Title	Where the Document can be viewed
Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code	https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2020/11/Complaint-HandlingCode.pdf

Chronological History of this Report

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

Report Approval

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Signed off by:

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Approved for publication:

Cllr Tracey Carter, Portfolio Holder for Strategic and
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