**Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024/25**

This report provides an overview of the housing related complaints (from people who live in our accommodation) we have received in the past year. It also includes examples of how learning from complaints has informed practice to improve the services we offer. It demonstrates our compliance with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code.

The code gives clear direction on how registered providers must manage complaints. This includes only having two stages and strict timescales on how quickly residents can expect to receive a full response.

The Customer Satisfaction Manager has been in post since June 2024 and has introduced a new system for how we manage complaints in our accommodation services.

**Complaints data and performance**

***Number of complaints***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Total number of stage 1 complaints closed | 112 \* |
| Number of complaints upheld | 38 |
| Number of complaints partially upheld | 29 |
| Number of complaints not upheld | 43 |

\*One complaint was withdrawn and a decision couldn’t be made on another as it was an HR issue, the outcome of which couldn’t be shared.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Total number of stage 2 complaints closed | 8 |
| Number of complaints upheld | 1 |
| Number of complaints partially upheld | 0 |
| Number of complaints not upheld | 7 |

***SEA Complaints***

Out of the 120 stage 1 and stage 2 complaints received, 24 (20%) came via SEA.

***Response timescale adherence***

All stage 2 complaints were acknowledged and responded to within the prescribed timescales. All but two of the stage 1 complaints were acknowledged within 5 working days. The two that were outside of the 5 day timescale were acknowledged 1 and 2 days late. Two stage 1 complaint responses were late by 1 and 3 days. The delays are due to workload; this has been acknowledged, and we will be recruiting to a Customer Satisfaction Officer role to ensure the workload is manageable.

***Refusals***

Seventeen complaints were refused. Fourteen of these were because they were wrongly reported and were Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) reports. These were dealt with through that process. There were three other refusals; one because the complaint related to something more than 12 months ago, the second was a disrepair claim and was picked up separately and the final one was refused as consent wasn’t given for a representative to deal with the complaint.

***Extensions***

Eighteen stage 1 complaint response timescales were extended. The main reason for extending the timescale is due to the Customer Satisfaction Manager taking leave and there being limited resources to cover the work. Recruitment to the new Customer Satisfaction Officer is imminent which will ensure we can adhere more closely to the timescales without having to extend them.

***Types of complaint***

Some complaints include more than one issue which is reflected in the figures.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Complaint type** | **Number** | **Number upheld** |
| Staff behaviour | 50 | 6 upheld, 3 partially upheld |
| Policy and procedure | 35 | 1 upheld, 4 partially upheld |
| Repairs and maintenance | 31 | 12 upheld |
| Contractors | 10 | 4 upheld, 2 partially upheld |
| Support | 5 | 0 upheld |
| Other | 5 | 0 upheld |
| Professional boundaries | 4 | 3 upheld |
| Damp and mould | 3 | 0 upheld |
| Voids | 3 | 3 upheld |
| EDI | 2 | 0 upheld |
| Rent | 1 | 0 upheld |

The nature and outcome of complaints are shared with Service and Operational Managers (or equivalent in central services) for them to address concerns about practice or behaviour. Where appropriate, information is also shared with HR and Directors.

More qualitative information about upheld complaints is shared at the Service Delivery Committee where the information is scrutinised in more depth.

**The Housing Ombudsman**

The code stipulates that we include the following in this report:

* any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;
* any annual report about the landlord’s performance from the Ombudsman; and
* any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.

At the time of writing this report we do not have any of the above and there has been no contact from the Ombudsman this year.

**Compensation**

Where we have upheld complaints this year, in some cases it has been appropriate to issue compensation because of a failure in service. We have awarded compensation in eight cases amounting to a total of almost £2,500.

The complaints where compensation was awarded relate to two main areas – repairs delays and disposal of belongings in error. This is covered further in ‘Themes and Learning’ below.

**Themes and learning**

Enhanced reporting and a dedicated team to handle housing related complaints has helped to identify areas for improvement. Work is already underway to ensure that we are learning from complaints and improving services to residents as a result of this learning. We will continue to further develop our work around complaints to identify areas for improvement in order to provide excellent services to the people we house.

Learning from complaints is included in the Annual Report to Residents. We will be exploring other ways of sharing learning through the website and newsletters, for example. The Framework Community members will be involved in this work.

The following themes have been identified through the complaints we have received.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Theme** | **Action/Learning** |
| Residents aren’t always kept up to date on the progress of repairs  | A working group has been established with clear terms of reference to agree workable solutions.Progress has been made in a few areas:* History notes are now being added to Pyramid which allows for an up to date status on a repair which can be shared with the resident.
* An escalation process has been established to ensure issues are raised upwards when needed.
* Solutions have been identified in the way Pyramid can provide data to improve how repairs are tracked, followed up and linked where needed
* We are working towards having a Residents’ Portal on our website where residents can access their own information on repairs
 |
| Inadequate communication from contractors to staff and residents | As above.Work has also begun with contractors to explore ‘text ahead’ approach.More regular contract meetings with our main contractors have been re-established |
| Contractors not completing jobs within timescales  | Contract management meetings have been re-established to address this. |
| Professional boundaries/staff behaviour | Raised with individual Service and Operations Managers to address |
| Unclear process in relation to immediate evictions from hostels | A procedure has been developed, feedback has been sought from the Framework Community Forum and the procedure will be included in Standard Operating Procedures |
| Staff behaviour concerns at a particular service | Raised with Operations Manager and Director |
| Quality of repairs | An improved Post Inspection procedure has been developed and will be introduced this year.Introduction of a Repairs Inspector role |
| Disposal and storage of resident belonging | The policy is under review and will be re-launched once approved |

Ensuring that residents know how to make a complaint needs continued attention. Staff need to ensure they embrace a positive complaint handling culture and not see complaints as negative. We need to continue to promote complaints and adhere to Policy and Procedure so we can identify where the improvements are needed and make changes to provide excellent service to our residents.

Work is already underway to identify if there are any particular services where we haven’t received complaints from residents. There will be various reasons why, some of which are understandable, for example, a service with only a small number of units; this needs to be interrogated further to establish if there are other reasons that we need to address, for example, staff compliance, lack of knowledge, barriers for residents etc. We will continue this work over the coming year.

**Sarah Cottrell**

**Assistant Director Housing Services**

**1st May 2025**

**Framework’s Board response to this report**

Framework’s Board has received the organisation’s Annual Self-Assessment of Compliance with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code.  It notes the accompanying Performance Report including areas identified for improvement.

The Board is committed to ensuring that there is a positive complaints culture in the organisation.  The Leadership Team has created a strong procedure to embed such a culture across the organisation, whilst recognising that more work is needed to enhance the collation of complaints data and to use it to drive service improvement.

A plan is in place to deliver this, which includes further staff training and the allocation of further dedicated resource to the management of complaints. Complaints are now considered on a Quarterly basis by the Service Delivery Committee.  The information it receives is summarised in this Annual Report to the Board.