

Housing Complaints Improvement Plan

Cathy McCarthy

RAG Rating
Complete
On Track
Not on Track but action plan in place
Not on Track no action plan in place

RAG	Activity	Purpose	Milestones	Dates	Update
Green	14113 Create long term plan for complaints.	To create a plan that will improve complaints handling across the Directorate to improve investigations, responses and put things right for out residents	Report made to DMT in October 2024	October 2024	The report made to DMT received broad support to go ahead with the improvements suggested
			Agreement on New Structure	Jan 2024	Permanent recruitment will begin in Feb 2025
Yellow	14128 Long-Term Team Resource	To recruit and retain a skilled complaints handling team to respond to complaints in line with our policy and external pressures	Structure Agreed	Jan 2024	JD's have been written and are pending assessment. Recruitment to begin in Feb 2025 Agency temps have been filling the essential roles as an interim measure
Purple	414291 Resident Engagement	To engage with our Residents to understand their views on our complaints handling	Four sessions held and feedback gathered	October 2024	Held four sessions, two in person and two via Team to gather views and the feedback received from residents on complaints handling to feed into the complaints improvement plan
Purple	17804 Backlog	Clear Backlog of Repairs Complaints caused by depleted resources	Backlog reduced to 18 wef 20 Jan 2025	January 2025	Due to staffing vacancies in the Repairs Complaints Service a further complaints backlog was created in the Housing Asset and Repairs Division , this has been largely cleared with 18 overdue in the division. Resourcing has stabilised and we will be beginning permanent recruitment in quarter four to provide consistency and stability within the team

15395 System Changes to Support Complaints Improvements	To make changes to the Complaints System (Infreemation) to support complaints case management changes	Check that the Infreemation system can support acknowledgement and extensions and other planned changes	October 2024	Acknowledgement and Extension The HOS and LGO complaints handling codes both allow; a five-day for a five-day acknowledgment period; the 10/20 days extension to cases when they are complex. Both of these changes have been incorporated into the Corporate Complaints Policy. The changes to the system will allow time to ensure that we fully understand the concerns of the resident and effectively resolve them.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of 5 Day acknowledgment period • Ability to extend cases by 10/20 working days when complex at stage 1/2 • To make changes to reporting fields to gain insight on trends • Split out Housing Ombudsman and Local Govt Ombudsman cases 	Project Plan Written	January 2025	Fields As part of the changes Housing will gain a process flow which will mean that we are able to bespoke some of the fields, including reason for complaint, according to our requirements which will improve reporting and insight.
	These changes will be applied to Housing which will act as a pilot for wider corporate changes	Project Launch Planned	January 2025	Ombudsman Ombudsman cases will be split into Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman cases due to the differing requirements of each. This will also allow greater reporting and monitoring of Ombudsman cases. Infreemation Relaunch in Housing As part of the refresh of Infreemation we can use the opportunity to relaunch this within housing as a case management tool rather than a logging system. This will better support good complaints management and improve knowledge and information management in complaints handling which will in turn better support complaints that go through the escalation process. Progress We had hoped to implement the acknowledgment and extension by Feb 2025 however the deadline has been pushed back to be implemented for 1 April 2025. This is due to this being a complex piece of work which we will need to ensure we get right. The changes that we make will also affect the quarterly reporting. This change will now be implemented for Housing Cases with the wider directorates following in 2026.

	14293 Training	Training – All Staff and Complaints Handling Staff	All agency staff complete an induction with their peers to ensure good complaints handling embedded	01 June 2025	All Staff- Customer First Training plus additional training to understand Complaints Handling Code, Service Request vs Complaint and good complaints handling.
		Training – Complaints Handling Staff			Complaints Handling Staff – Meeting held with the L&D partner to discuss training needs and has provided a training plan for the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response Writing • Coaching Skills (for complaints specialists) • Housing Ombudsman Code Training • Personal Resilience Training
	15393 Separate Housing Policies	To write, gain approval for and implement separate complaints and compensation polices for housing complaints.	Compensation policy is in draft	01 June 2025	Compensation policy is drafted and awaiting internal comment before legal review. To consider how this fits with the Corporate approach
	Managing HOS and LGO Cases	The purpose is to manage the increasing volume of Ombudsman cases to timescale and comply with the orders made and learn from the findings.	Ombudsman Progress meeting in place	01 November 2024	The volumes of determinations has decreased in recent months and the progress meeting has changed to fortnightly All actions currently tracked by Microsoft planner and will move over to Infreemation
			Changes to Infreemation to enable reporting by splitting the case types. A further change will mean we can also track of action.	01 April 2025	
	Complex Case Reviews	To implement a case review for complex cases			Complex case panels have been scheduled in with a weekly placeholder to ensure attendance. The definition of complex includes The first complex case review was held as a result of feedback from a complaints resident involvement session where the issues lay across multiple divisions.

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	17793 Update Corporate Complaints Policy	To update policy to ensure compliance with the code	Updated timescales and added in acknowledgment timescales	September 2024	Corporate Complaints policy update to ensure compliance with both Ombudsman Codes
	17967 To investigate and implement a Housing Channel for Complaints Logging	To ensure that as complaints come in the risk is assessed and to ensure accurate allocation of the complaint to investigate the possibility of a complaints channel for logging housing complaints	Completed the analysis of the source, additional sense check required on results	April 2025	Completed the analysis of the source, additional sense check required on results
	17971 Agreed actions from complaints	To implement a process to ensure that agreed actions from complaints are followed up	Task system implemented	November 2024	Task system implemented and to review effectiveness on the next three months.

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	17972 Weekly Complaints Meeting	To redefine the weekly complaints meeting to include representatives from Corporate Complaints Team and to use to identify blockages and provide support to the teams	To be completed once the backlog is cleared	03 February 2025	
	17802 Agree escalation process for High Risk Complaints	To ensure that there is an appropriate escalation route for high risk complaints	All cases are triaged when first received into the team and escalation route to directors and Head of Service has been agreed	01 Nov 2024	Complete
	17805 Develop a Learning Framework	To develop a structured approach to learning – moving away from ad hoc reviews	Diagnosis completed and planning is in progress	01 April 2024	Planning includes governance behind the learning to ensure that all staff and teams are aware of their responsibilities regarding learning

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	Annual Self Assessment	To self asses against the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code	Self assessment completed for 2023/4	1 June 2024	To self asses on 01 April 2025 for 2024/5.
			Self assessment to be completed for 24/25	Between 1 April 2025 and 1 June 2025	
	Complete annual submission for the Housing Ombudsman	To complete the required annual submission to the Housing Ombudsman which includes an Annual Complaints and Service Improvement Report, self assessment and complaints policy	Self assessment considered and by the governing body	23 May 2025	To begin collation of the info required to ensure that we can meet the deadline of 01 June 2025. To be considered at DMT and by governing body prior to submission.
	Annual Complaints and Service Improvement Report 2024 and 2025	To write and submit the annual Complaints and Service Improvement Report for 2023/4 and 24/25 with the response from the governing body	Collation of the 2023-24 report is underway	01 June 2024	Collating all of the information to provide the report to the Housing Ombudsman has begun. The work we have completed on learning will assist with 2024-25 report.
			Completed and submitted.	Between 01 April 2025 and 30 June 2025	