

Annual complaints performance and service improvement report for the year 2024/25

In February 2024, the Housing Ombudsman published a new Complaint Handling Code for registered housing providers to enable a positive complaints culture across the housing sector.

Retail Trust will each year be completing an annual self-assessment devised by the Housing Ombudsman to assess and measure our compliance with the Code, and use this to ensure that we improve the way we manage our complaints processes and promote a positive complaint handling culture within the organisation.

Complaints received within the period May 2024 – April 2025

During the last financial year, we received 9 formal complaints across our five retirement estates which look after up to 420 residents. All complaints were full investigated as per the policy. The subjects of the complaints were as follows:

- **5 complaints related to our maintenance/repairs and grounds service:**

Two related to speeding cars and use of parking spaces onsite. Neither of these were upheld.

One complaint related to the health and safety practices of our ground's maintenance and maintenance teams. The allegations within the complaint were not upheld, however, additional safety measures have been introduced for staff working on site.

One complaint was relating to gritting of paths. This was not upheld.

One complaint related to the length of time for a repair to be completed and the communications with the resident. This was partly upheld as we could have communicated better with the resident over the delay.

- **3 complaints related to our housing support service:**

One was in relation to the way in which a member of team had dealt with an issue raised by a resident's family. This complaint was upheld and additional training was provided for the member of staff.

One complaint related to the lack of Service Charge reconciliation rebate which they should have received. The complaint was partly upheld and the rebate was provided.

One complaint received about the quality of support provided in a residents home whilst a contractor was in their house. This was not upheld. The resident appealed against this and the stage 2 process also found it to not be upheld. Ombudsman details provided.

- **1 complaint related to the catering provision and the portion size of one meal in the café.**
This was upheld and portion sizes reviewed with the catering team.

In the National Housing Regulators Tenant Perception Survey:

55.7% of respondents stated that they were very satisfied with our approach to complaints handling, while 29.6% stated they were fairly satisfied.

9.2% of respondents stated that they were fairly dissatisfied with our approach to complaints handling, while 5.5% of respondents stated that they were very dissatisfied.

Improvements to our complaints handling processes

We continue to use our CRM system to include our complaints processes. All complaints are now logged on to our CRM system, which generates an automatic acknowledgement response to the person making the complaint.

The allocated Investigating Officer is identified on the CRM system. The system will send automatic reminders to the Investigating Officer to ensure that we maintain appropriate timescales for responses to complaints.

The outcome of the complaint is recorded on the system which will improve our complaints monitoring processes.

If a resident is unhappy with the outcome of the complaint and wishes to make an appeal, this will be recorded on the system along with details of the Investigating Officer dealing with the appeal and the outcome of the appeal.

Following our self-assessment against the Code, we have made amendments to our Suggestions, Concerns and Complaints Policy to ensure that it adheres to the principles of the Code. Residents are directed towards this more regularly.

Governance of our complaints processes

We have quarterly meetings of our Housing Committee which is a sub-committee of the Board of Trustees.

During this meeting we discuss any complaints since the previous meeting which includes:

- the number of Stage 1 complaints that we have received within the period
- the subjects of the complaints
- outcomes of the complaints
- the number of Stage 2 complaints that we have received within the period
- the subjects of the complaints
- outcomes of Stage 2 complaints
- involvement of the Housing Ombudsman regarding complaints, where applicable

The report also includes any changes that we have made to our services following suggestions, concerns or complaints raised.