



## **Complaints Performance and Service Improvement 2024/25**

### **Introduction**

This report provides an update on Westfield's complaint handling performance over the last financial year and highlights the changes we have made as a result of the learnings from complaints.

This report will cover:

- an update on the recent changes to the Housing Ombudsman (HO) Code
- our self-assessment against that code
- an overview of the complaints we have received
- some of the changes we are implementing to improve our complaints process
- the learnings we have embedded from complaints over the past year.

### **Complaints Handling Code Annual Submission**

The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code became statutory on 1 April 2024 following a consultation with landlords, residents and other bodies.

Part of the new statutory nature of the Code means that landlords are required to submit an annual submission of their performance against the Code to ensure they are compliant.

Submissions for landlords with under 1,000 homes are to be provided within 6 months after their financial year-end.

### **Self Assessment**

We have conducted a full self-assessment of our compliance against the code and have fully critiqued our approach. We identified areas that needed improvement and have implemented these.

The implementation of the complaints module last year has helped to improve record keeping and analysis.

We have been briefing staff during the development of the HOS Code. In July we will carry out a further briefing, and training for staff and Managers.

Our full 2025 Self Assessment against the Code has been published on our website.

## **Complaints Overview**

Over the course of the last financial year, Westfield Housing logged 15 complaints. Most of which were dealt with as stage 1 complaints and only one complaint progress to stage 2.

We have had no findings of non-compliance with the Complaints Handling Code during this reporting period.

We have received no reports during this reporting period from the Ombudsman.

The tables below breaks down complaints received:

<b>Complaints Received</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
Total Complaints	5	2	0	8

<b>Complaints Logged by Stages</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
Stage 1	5	2	0	7
Stage 2	0	0	0	1
Cases escalated to The Housing Ombudsman	0	0	0	0
<b>Complaint received by type/service area</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
Damp & Mould	2			1
Repairs	2	2		5
Energy Efficiency Work (SHDF)	1			2

<b>Reason for the Complaint</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
Dissatisfaction with service provided by contractors/WHA	2	2		3
Failure or refusal to do something a tenant wants us to do	1			2
Delays with Repairs	2			2
Dissatisfaction with quality of repair				1

Complaints answered on time	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Stage 1	100%	100%	-	100%
Stage 2	-	-	-	100%

Complaints Outcomes	Stage 1	Stage 2
Upheld	12	-
Partially upheld	0	-
Not upheld	2	1
Open (response to be provided)	0	-
Total	14	1

### **What have we learnt?**

This section outlines key actions and improvements implemented over the past year, based on lessons learned from tenant complaints and feedback. Our aim is to enhance service delivery, tenant satisfaction, and operational efficiency by proactively responding to recurring issues and concerns.

#### **Staff Training and Communication Improvements**

- **Out-of-Hours Repairs Training:** Regular refresher sessions are now provided by Orbis for out-of-hours staff, ensuring they clearly understand what constitutes a repairs emergency and how to respond appropriately.
- **Communication Culture:** A number of complaints reinforced the need for honest and open communication. We are actively promoting this approach to reduce the number of complaints received.

#### **SHDF Project Delivery Adjustments**

- **Disruption from Insulation Works:** Feedback from some tenants regarding disruption from internal wall insulation under the SHDF programme has led to a review. We have now agreed to adopt alternative, less disruptive methods for future projects.

#### **Repairs Access and Appointment Management**

- **Missed Appointments:** Investigations revealed that access issues were often unrecorded and follow-up appointments were not scheduled. Contractors have been reminded during review meetings of the importance of appointment scheduling, behaviour expectations, and accurate record-keeping. We are also exploring the feasibility of evening and weekend appointments.

## Damp and Mould Oversight

- **Internal Oversight Strengthened:** Responsibility for the damp and mould monitoring record has been assigned to the Technical Services Officer, who now oversees case progression to ensure adherence to policy timescales.

## Tenant Liability and Contents Insurance

- **Damaged Personal Items:** A complaint regarding reimbursement for damaged personal items post-leak, which was not upheld, highlighted the need to promote tenant contents insurance. While a decoration allowance was provided, contents insurance remains the appropriate route for personal item claims. Awareness campaigns will be increased.

## Parking Provision and External Engagement

- **Estate Parking Challenges:** Although additional parking spaces were created in new developments and possible corner plot conversions identified, budget constraints have limited expansion. Discussions with Cumberland Council confirmed no additional funding, but future communal EV charging points may be possible. We will engage in the upcoming four-yearly Cumberland Highways consultation and review the Communal Frontages Policy in 2025 in line with Housing Ombudsman guidance (1999 ruling).

## Grounds Maintenance Procurement

- **Contract Re-Tender:** The grounds maintenance contract was re-tendered with resident feedback in mind, particularly around grass collection. Tivoli's successful bid enables grass to be collected on every cut, meeting resident expectations.

## Repairs Portal Implementation

- **Real-Time Repairs Management:** The contractor portal now allows for real-time repairs updates, including photo uploads and early delay notifications. This has significantly improved repair timelines and reduced outstanding jobs. We are now assessing solutions for proactive tenant notifications regarding reported repairs and associated timescales.

The above actions reflect our ongoing commitment to learning from tenant experiences and improving our services. We will continue to monitor progress, engage with tenants, and ensure that feedback drives meaningful change.

## Compliments

We continue to receive a high volume of positive feedback about our staff and the services we provide. Understanding what is working well is just as valuable as identifying areas for improvement. To ensure we capture both aspects, we maintain a record of all compliments alongside any complaints received. This enables us to share examples of good practice and learning across the organisation.

From April 2024 up until the end of March 2025, we received 32 recorded compliments. There were 19 recorded for the same period when compared to the previous year.

## **Board Response**

Our Board appointed Kevin Foley, as Board Member Responsible for Complaints (BMRC). His role is to help ensure:

- Our self-assessment against the HOS code is scrutinised and challenged.
- Scrutinising and reviewing our complaints performance information and evidence to assure Board it's accurate and reliable.
- Challenging any commentary to ensure we make a fair and reasonable assessment about how we're doing.

We report to our Board quarterly to keep them informed of complaints performance, key issues, learning and improvement.

“We are pleased to see that the Association continues to learn from complaints and is committed to embedding lessons learned into our operations. Our aim is to be an organisation that uses feedback to continually improve the services we provide to our tenants. The self-assessment has been completed and reviewed by the Board prior to submission to the Housing Ombudsman. The Board is assured that Westfield is adhering to the Code and will continue to receive quarterly complaint reports to support ongoing oversight and improvement.” - Kevin Foley, Member Responsible for Complaints & Board Member.

If you have any feedback about the self-assessment, any more general comments about how we deal with complaints, require any further information or would like to get involved in reviewing our complaints process please let us know by emailing us at [enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk)