

Introduction

This report provides an update on Sunderland City Council's complaint handling performance over the last financial year of 2024/2025. Sunderland City Council had 171 tenancies for this financial year. Offering tenancies for General needs housing, supported living for those with a learning disability and supported accommodation for rough sleepers and survivors of domestic abuse.

This report will cover:

- An update on the recent changes to the Housing Ombudsman Code
- Our self-assessment against that code
- An overview of the complaints we have received.
- Some of the changes we have implemented to improve our complaints process.
- The learnings we have gained from complaints over the past year.

Complaint Handling Code 2024

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (the Act) empowered the Housing Ombudsman to issue a code of practice about the procedures members of the scheme should have in place for considering complaints.

It also placed a duty on the Housing Ombudsman to monitor compliance with a code of practice that it has issued. The Code clarifies the definition of a complaint, how complaints can be made, the process that should be used and the governance structure around complaints.

The code also instructs Social Housing Providers to produce this report to show compliance with the code.

Sunderland City Council complied with the Code during 2023/24 and published its first self – assessment online which was verified by the Housing Ombudsman.

Self-assessment

A detailed self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code was published on our website here [Complaints-Appendix-A-Self-Assessment-2425.pdf](#) In summary, this

demonstrated our compliance with the code and was latterly verified by the Housing Ombudsman.

An updated version of the Code for 2024/25 can be found online.

Some of the changes made in this financial year as a result of the implementation of the code are;

- Further improvements to the complaint management system have been successfully implemented allowing staff to allocate, update and review all complaints across the organisation.
- Housing Operations staff have attended workshops facilitated by the Housing Ombudsman in relation to complaint handling during 2024/25.

Complaints Overview

Stage 1 Complaints 2024/25

There were no stage 1 complaints raised during this financial year which saw a decrease from 2023/24 where 7 stage 1 complaints had been raised.

Stage 2 Complaints 2024/25

There were no stage 2 complaints raised during this period.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

95 tenants were surveyed as part of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey. None had made a formal complaint during this period.

Housing Ombudsman determinations

There were no Housing Ombudsman determinations for 2024/25.

Learning from Complaints

Although there were no formal complaints raised in this period the following improvements were made as a result of resident feedback most notably from customer care visits.

- Monthly estate inspections now take place for those schemes that have a Grounds Maintenance service charge to ensure value for money.
- Logging in and out system for contractors working at Washington Old School
- Upgraded Smart Technology for those customers who receive the service.
- Training for the Housing Operations Team in complaint handling

Compliance

To demonstrate compliance Sunderland City Council actively engages with the Housing Ombudsman and completes on an annual basis,

- Self-Assessment against the Code of Guidance
- Publish a complaints report.
- Publish the board's response to the report.

Sunderland City Council have not received any reports from the Housing Ombudsman in relation to performance.