



Introduction

This report provides an update on Sunderland City Council's complaint handling performance over the last financial year of 2025/2026. Sunderland City Council had 196 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 2024/25 and published its first self – assessment online which was verified by the Housing Ombudsman. Following review, the Housing Ombudsman recommended several changes to be made to our Complaints and Compliments Policy for 2025/26.

These changes were implemented from May 2026, and an updated Policy can be found here [Housing Complaints Policy Final 1.pdf](#).

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.

Complaints Overview Stage

Stage 1 Complaints 2025/26

There were 5 stage one complaints for this period, three were not upheld, one partially upheld and one upheld.

Stage 2 Complaints 2025/26

There was one stage 2 complaint for this period which was partially upheld.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

74 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 2025/26.

Learning from Complaints

The following improvements were made as a result of learning outcomes obtained via the complaints process and most notably from customer care visits.

- Customers are given a written explanation of what to expect including timescales when Electrical Safety checks are scheduled.
- A specialist Heating Engineer has been enlisted on our framework to assist with the Maintenance of Air Source Heat Pumps.
- A new resident forum has been set up on one of our supported schemes.
- Incoming Tenant's are given the choice of retaining and using the existing key safe from when the property was void.

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.
- Comply with any recommendations as instructed by the Housing Ombudsman service.