

## Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024/25

### 1.0 Summary

1.1 This report covers the period from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025.

1.2 Significant progress was made in relation to tenant experience and complaint handling in the context of the association's own drive for service improvements and the implementation of the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) code requirements, including but not limited to:

- Full review of the organisations complaints policy in November 2024.
- The organisation established its first Tenant Experience Committee.
- The appointment of its first Member Responsible for Complaints.

1.3 This work has strengthened the relationship between tenants and the non-executive functions within the organisation and facilitated discussions around service improvements. It has enabled the organisation to take a step back and look more broadly at processes and view them through the lens of genuine tenant experience.

1.4 Improved clarity given to tenants on what is a complaint and what is a service request, and how tenants make a commendation as well as a complaint has opened up the nature of LSHA's approach to complaints handling to its tenant engagement approaches.

1.5 There have been three key threads that align with the HOS code.

- Improvement in complaint handling
- Lessons learned
- The way in which complaints travel through the organisation

### 2.0 The nature of complaints, trends in escalation and resolution

2.1 Firstly, I wanted to set out how the organisation compared to last year. The below table shows on face value what appears to be a sharp increase in complaints at stage 1 and stage 2 compared to the previous LSHA financial year:

<b>Stage</b>	<b>October 23- September 24</b>	<b>October 24- September 25</b>	<b>% increase</b>
Number of complaints	16	41	156%
Number escalated to Stage 2	1	11	1000%
Number escalated to HOS	0	0	0
Number of complaints upheld	5	9	80%
Number partially upheld	4	15	275%
Number not upheld	5	16	220%

- 2.2 On face value the increase in complaints made appears of significant concern and that there are failings on the organisation, however from the perspective of the non-executive board and my role as Member Responsible for Complaints it demonstrates an improvement in the relationship and communication between tenants and their landlord.
- 2.3 The organisation should not be afraid of complaints, and they should be seen as opportunities to improve. Key to an effective complaints process is allowing tenants to feel safe in that they can make complaints without facing discrimination or any perceived infringement of their rights or security of tenure.
- 2.4 For the period 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025, 41 complaints were raised by 28 individuals. Three tenants submitted two complaints each, three tenants submitted three complaints, and one individual submitted six separate complaints.
- 2.5 Eleven of the stage 1 complaints (27%) were escalated to Stage 2. Six of these were from two tenants who each escalated three complaints to Stage 2. On two occasions, tenants complained directly to the Housing Ombudsman and were re-directed to LSHA. One complaint related to the Adult Social Care of a relative not housed by LSHA. This is a useful summary as demonstrates the context of complaints coming from a small number of tenants, and that some were of the view they could bypass the process and go straight to stage 3.
- 2.6 Summary table below shows further trends in the complaints received in 2024/2025:

	No.	Stage two	HOS enq.
Maintenance, including Mice & grounds maintenance	14	4	1
Loss of Heating / Hot Water	3		
Damp and mould	1		
Universal Credit	1	1	
Domestic Abuse / Anti-Social behaviour	3	3	1
Staff Response / Conduct	5		
Disabled Access	1		
Various (multiple issues on one complaint)	6	2	
Overcrowding	1		
Health & Safety Issue	1	1	
Cleaning	1		
My Tenancy	1		
Arrears and rent	1		
DSAR	1		
Support by ASC in other County	1		

### 3.0 Lessons learned

- 3.1 The majority of the complaints listed above fall under maintenance matters and the first step LSHA are taking is reviewing its approaches to maintenance responses; namely:

- A new Contractors Code of Conduct under new repairs and maintenance contracts
  - More robust estate inspection measures
  - Visibility on actions contractors need to consider when entering a tenants home
- 3.2** Following detailed investigation by LSHA officers into the complaints, learning opportunities were identified in 25 cases, and the key theme being effective communication.
- 3.3** In the summer of 2025 a review of complaints was undertaken with the MRC, senior management and front line staff. It was a positive opportunity to see how complaints were considered across different levels of the organisation and identified four key improvements that are being implemented across the organisation. LSHA has agreed that a review of this nature should take place twice a year.
- 3.4** In communicating and developing lessons learned across the organisation the outcomes from this session have been embedded in officers 1-1 meetings and through the tenants quarterly newsletter.
- 4.0 The way in which complaints travel through the Association**
- 4.1** The data provided on complaints demonstrates good work by officers in tracking complaints through the two stages. As part of the review by the MRC, there have been discussions around the use of ICT in tracking complaints. Issues can arise if processes are email driven and the organisation is now looking at implementing the complaints management module of its housing management software.
- 4.2** The increased volume in complaints compared to previous years suggests there is an increase in understanding of how tenants can progress complaints and that officers within LSHA are able to pick up complaints and respond to them through the required stage structure.
- 4.3** Three members of staff attended training about managing unreasonable and persistent behaviour during the year.
- 5.0 Alignment with the HOS code**
- 5.1** As per the Complaints Handling Code:
- There were no complaints we refused to accept
  - There were no findings of non-compliance with this Code by the HOS
  - We did not receive an annual report about our performance from the HOS
  - We did not receive any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to LSHA's work.

Report from: James Cross, the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)

Presented to, and approved by, Board on 5 November 2025

*The Board met on 5 November 2025 and reviewed the Complaints and Service Improvement Report for 2024/25 presented by James Cross, Member responsible for Complaints, and approved it for publication.*

*The Board noted the high number of complaints received in 2024/25 compared with the previous year. Complaints provide valuable insight and learning opportunities. The Board reviewed the self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code and proposed revisions to the complaints policy, approving both documents. They noted that the Association's complaint policy appears easy for tenants to access and use, which is reassuring.*

*Members noted the lessons learned sessions introduced during the year, bringing together the MRC and staff from across the association. The Board recognises that LSHA may not always get things right, and so it is important that insight gained from complaints is embedded.*