

Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report

April 2024 to March 2025



Message from our Chair, Jacinta Balchin

I'm pleased to present our Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report for 2025, reflecting our ongoing commitment to openness, accountability, and continuous improvement.

As an Almshouse's Charity, we want to provide a local service, that is consistently good and easy to use. However, we recognise that sometimes things do go wrong and it's during these moments that we take the opportunity to listen, understand, and act to make things better. I am delighted that we have not received any complaints during this reporting period and attribute this to the hard work and stronger resident engagement with both our managing agent and board of trustees.

We recognise the importance of using complaints to help us improve and help provide the best service possible and avoid the same problems in the future. I extend my sincere gratitude to our residents for trusting us and being a part of this journey. Your feedback helps us to get better every day.



The role of the Housing Ombudsman Service and the Complaint Handling Code 2024

The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) is an independent body that helps resolve disputes between residents and landlords. Its role is to investigate complaints fairly with the aim to achieve a resolution that is satisfactory to both parties.

From 1 April 2024, landlords are required by law to follow the 'Complaint Handling Code'. This Code aims to ensure landlords handle complaints well and give residents a better service.

The Complaint Handling Code sets out the standards that landlords should follow when handling complaints from residents. It ensures that complaints are dealt with quickly, fairly, and effectively. It outlines principles such as accessibility and transparency in the complaint handling process.

If residents feel their landlord isn't following the Code, they can ask the Ombudsman to investigate. This is important because it makes sure residents have a fair way to sort out problems with their housing provider.

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman using the details below:

Complaint form: Fill in the online complaint form on the Housing Ombudsman website.

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Phone: 0300 111 3000

Write to: Housing Ombudsman Service,
PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston PR2 0ET

Housing Ombudsman Service Spotlight reports

Every year, the Housing Ombudsman Service publishes reports on areas of service provision that they see a high amount of failure through their casework across all landlords. It examines the issues and sets out recommendations for landlords. Over the next 12 months we will self-access our services against these reports and embed the learnings into our services.

Performance – 2024–25 Summary

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Total number of complaints

During 2024–25, we did not receive any complaints, a 100% improvement from 2023–24.

In line with our policy, on rare occasions not everything is considered a complaint.

In cases where a request is not considered a complaint, we'll explain the reasons why and will give them the option to state their case or bring it to the Ombudsman. We will never take a blanket approach to excluding complaints or complainants; we will consider each individual and circumstances before making a decision.

Themes



Our engagement with the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS)

We've had no cases where determinations were received from the Housing Ombudsman Service:

From resident feedback, we know service requests have focused on the following:

- State of the communal areas

Our most common service areas for requests are:

- Cleanliness and decoration of the internal communal area
- Provision of external amenities notably linked to the bike store and state of the communal garden and bin area

Learnings and areas of improvement

Keeping our focus on the communal areas has been challenging due to other conflicting priorities and lack of resource.

We've recognised where the skills of our existing and new trustees have been applied more efficiently with our managing agents' service to progress improvement.

Performance meetings: Progress meetings with the Managing Agent are scheduled every two weeks.

Enhanced Trustee oversight: The Managing Agent and Trustee lead for complaints provides an update to every Trustee meeting.

Regular training: HOS and Almshouse Association training links are circulated to all Trustees and our Managing Agent