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Bolsover District Council

Meeting of the Tenant Participation Review and Development Group on 16 July 2024

Agenda Item 5: Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report 2023/24

Classification:	This report is Public
Report By:	Assistant Director of Housing Management and Enforcement

The Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code became statutory from 1 April 2024, which means that social housing landlords are now obliged by law to follow its requirements.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 places a legal duty on the Ombudsman to monitor social housing landlord’s compliance with the Code. Section 8 of the HOS Complaint Handling Code requires that landlords must produce an Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report for scrutiny and challenge.

This annual report provides an analysis of the complaints, comments and compliments received by the Council during 2023/24.

This report seeks to provide information on the performance of the Council’s complaint handling in terms of the volume and timeliness of the responses. In addition, the report seeks to identify themes, trends and lessons learnt that drive service improvements.

The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) has a two-stage complaint handling process which requires:

- All Complaint Acknowledgements responded within 5 working days.
- Stage One complaints must be responded to withing 10 working days.
- Stage Two within 20 working days.

During 2023/24, the Council’s Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy (CCC Policy) had a 3-stage procedure:

- Stage One Informal – 3 working days
- Stage Two Formal – 15 working days
- Stage Three Internal Reviews – 20 working days

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For the purpose of this report, HOS Stage One complaints consist of the Informal and Formal stages.

Whilst the report must show the Council's performance against the new HOS Complaint Handling Code, some of the tables and charts present the data to enable analysis against the CCC Policy which was in operation during the transition period.

Whilst the main driver for the report is to look at complaints, the Council can learn a lot from the comments, compliments and M.P. enquires received and therefore this report also seeks to analyse this data.

Our self-assessment contained in the report shows that the Council considers the service offered to be compliant with the Code.

The documents were reviewed by the Bolsover Tenants Challenge and Change Group on 18 June prior to submission.

In 2023/24, there were 16 Complaints categorised as HOS Stage One which were responded to outside of Housing Ombudsman timescales (10 working days), however all were within the CCC Policy timescale of 15 working days.

In the future, any complaints which are out of the Housing Ombudsman timescales the reasons will be documented and the Council will investigate. Measures will be put into place to ensure that complaints can be answered within the Housing Ombudsman timescales contained within the Statutory Code.

Our annual submission to the HOS providing access to our report and self-assessment was made prior to the deadline on 30 June 2024. The documents are available on the [Council website](#) and within contact centres.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That members of the Group acknowledge the report and self-assessment in appendix 1.
2. That members review the proposed content for the tenant summary version, as suggested by the Challenge and Change Group.

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment and Housing
Ambition: Housing
Priority: Maintaining and improving property and housing management standards and ensuring that standards and living conditions in the district contribute towards better health outcomes for all

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Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment and Housing

Target HOU04: Work towards compliance with the Social Housing Consumer Standards, ensuring tenants' voice is key when developing new council housing policies, procedures, and improvements.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Appendix No	Title
1.	Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report 2023/24
2.	Draft Tenant Summary – Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report 2023/24 (to follow)