

2024 Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

Background

The Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code sets out best practice for landlords' complaint handling procedures, to enable a positive complaints culture across the social housing sector, regardless of the size or type of landlord. The Code encourages landlord-tenant relationships so that residents can raise a complaint if things go wrong.

The Complaint Handling Code ('the Code') became statutory on 1 April 2024, meaning that all members of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme are obliged by law to follow its requirements.

More information about the Code can be found here: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/complaint-handling-code/>

This report includes the self-assessment we have carried out against the Code and as part of this process we have reviewed and updated our complaints policy and procedures. No non-compliances with the Code have been identified.

Our Approach

We have always operated an 'open-door' policy, and we intend to keep this approach while, at the same time, enabling a transparent and open complaints process that is effective and fair.

This commitment is embedded throughout the organisation, for example our charitable goals include:

- To provide an excellent quality of life for residents and tenants which is one of the best provided by residential care homes and independent living accommodation in Norwich and the surrounding area.
- To engage effectively with all stakeholders on the operation and development of the organisation.

Our aim will always be to satisfactorily resolve potential issues, suggestions or expressions of dissatisfaction before they progress to a complaint. We pride ourselves on being both a proactive and responsive provider, actively engaging with our Tenants.

Residential Care and Independent Living

We recognise that, in order to provide the best level of housing and support for our Tenants, we need to collaborate and show openness and transparency in the way we work together. Complaints, compliments and suggestions are a crucial part of this as they help us to learn what we are doing right, where we can improve and what we need to change.

We recognise that complaints can and should be seen in a positive light and can help us to develop and improve our services.

In response to the new statutory requirement, we have reviewed and updated our complaints policy and procedures to align with the Code. We have also strengthened our understanding of the Code and reviewed our internal processes and staff roles to ensure we are compliant.

Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

Between April 2023 – March 2024, Brakendon Close received 0 complaints. No complaints were received that related to a service request.

No complaints were escalated to or sent directly to the Housing Ombudsman. There were no findings of non-compliance received from the Housing Ombudsman.

We recognise that low complaint volumes could be a sign that residents are unable to complain, and that Tenants within the older community can be, at times, reluctant to proceed with a formal complaints process. However, we try to ensure that any barriers to the complaints process are addressed and broken down.

For example, we hold monthly Tenants meetings to ensure there is ample opportunity to openly discuss and address potential issues, however small. Every meeting has an Any Other Business agenda item open to the floor, which regularly proves popular with Tenants. Tenants are also encouraged to request items to be added to the agenda.

We also benefit from significant staffing levels on the site, accessible to Tenants, compared to most Housing Associations. Our site is staffed during office hours 7 days a week. With up to 9 staff working onsite each Monday to Friday. All staff are encouraged to interact with Tenants, familiarising themselves with Tenants' individual circumstances. Therefore, allowing a personalised and effective approach to resolving issues.

We can be confident that these measures are effective given the other feedback received in the period, notably both Quality Assurance Survey and Tenant Perception Survey results.



Residential Care and Independent Living

In the 2024 Quality Assurance Survey, 20 of the 24 Questions scored 100% for satisfaction (being Good or Excellent). The remaining 4 Questions each scored above 90%.

In the 2024 Tenant Perception Surveys, as mandated and written by the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, 11 of the 12 questions scored above 90%, with the 12th scoring 89%. This was significantly stronger than other reputable Housing Associations.

In TP09 – Satisfaction with the landlord’s approach to handling of complaints, Brakendon Close scored a satisfaction score of 91.7%. By contrast, most other local associations only achieved a 20 – 40% satisfaction rate in TP09. Further demonstrating that our approach to complaint handling in the year has been successful.

We feel that the two sets of survey results are more than sufficient to dispel any suggestions that the low number of complaints could be a sign that residents are unable to complain.

Governing Body Response

The board is assured and satisfied that Brakendon Close has put in place new measures for ensuring it is compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, as evidenced by the self-assessment and annual complaints performance and service improvement report.

Over the coming year, the board look forward to seeing learning outcomes from complaints as a way of ensuring that Brakendon Close is proactive in improving service levels where possible.



Residential Care and Independent Living