

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 16 October 2024  
**Report of:** Head of Housing Services  
**Title of Report:** Annual Complaint Performance & Service Improvement Report 2023/24

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To approve the Annual Complaint Performance & Service Improvement Report (Housing) 2023/24
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Well-Run Council
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28

<b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:	
1.	<b>Agree</b> the content of the Annual Complaint Performance & Service Improvement Report 2023/24 (Housing) in Appendix 1; and
2.	<b>Provide</b> a formal response to the Annual Complaint Performance & Service Improvement Report 2023/24.

<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1	Annual Complaint Performance & Service Improvement Report 2023/24

## Introduction and background

1. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 places a legal duty on the Housing Ombudsman to monitor social housing landlords' compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

2. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code became a statutory requirement of all social housing landlords, including Local Authorities with housing stock.
3. The Complaint Handling Code requires that landlords must produce an Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report for scrutiny and challenge, as well as completing and publishing an annual self-assessment against compliance with the Code.
4. The Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2023/24 is set out in Appendix 1. This report covers all complaints we have handled from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 that relate to our services as a landlord and/or would come under the scope of the Housing Ombudsman. It does not include complaints about other Council services which would come under the scope of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.
5. The guidance from the Housing Ombudsman states:

*“Landlords will ... be expected to include their 2023/2024 performance against the Code in place at that time, covering the following:*

- *a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance - this must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept*
- *any findings of non-compliance with the Code by the Ombudsman*
- *the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints*
- *its actions following any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman*
- *its actions following any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord*

*It will be up to individual landlords to decide how to ensure all the points are covered in the report. The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.”*

6. Whilst the report needs to be submitted to the Housing Ombudsman, they have instructed that the report should be written in a format to present the information to residents.
7. For the purposes of the annual report, the Housing Ombudsman considers that Cabinet is the governing body.
8. This report seeks to provide information on the performance of the Council's complaint handling relating to the landlord function, in terms of the volume, outcomes and timeliness of the responses. In addition, the report seeks to identify themes, trends and lessons learnt that will drive service improvements.

### **Report Structure**

9. The report covers the role of the Housing Ombudsman; an explanation of our complaints process as well as performance data and analysis for complaints handled by OCC and ODS relating to the housing landlord function.

- 10. The report also covers details of engagement with the Housing Ombudsman, including a Complaint Handling Failure Order issued in July 2023.
- 11. Further analysis of trends and challenges is also provided. As well as learning, service development, and improvements made.
- 12. Finally, the report sets out further improvements planned for the remainder of 2024/25 and beyond.

**Requirement of Cabinet**

- 13. There is a requirement for the Governing Body (Cabinet) to provide a response to the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and for that response to be incorporated within the final report or published alongside it.

**Financial implications**

- 14. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

**Legal issues**

- 15. There is a legal requirement to have an Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report approved by the Governing Body (Cabinet) and for the report to then be published. A response by Cabinet to the report will be published with the report.

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**Background Papers:** None

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