



Complaints Overview 2023/2024 & Service Improvement Report

Written by Heather Nash—Housing Services Manager

Meadway House
17/21 Brighton Road
Surbiton
Surrey
KT6 5LR

Registered with charitable status under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014—No.17374R

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Member of the National Housing Federation

Introduction

At KCHA, we aim to provide good quality housing, services and amenities. We are dedicated to making sure our tenants thrive and positively influence the communities in which they live.

However, despite our best efforts and intentions, at times, things can go wrong. Our aim is put things right as soon as possible for you.

The Housing Ombudsman Complaint handling Code

The Housing Ombudsman Complaint handling code became statutory on 1st April 2024. This means that Landlords like us at KCHA, are obliged by law to follow its requirements.

Background

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 empowered the Housing Ombudsman to issue a code of practice about the procedures Landlords and Registered Providers (RP's) should have in place for considering complaints. It also placed a duty on the Housing Ombudsman to monitor compliance with a code of practice it has issued.

KCHA is committed to service improvement and to improve our service delivery we review our Policies and Procedures regularly and adhere to the Chartered Institute of Housing professional standards. Monitoring our complaints helps us to do this. A summary of complaints received is reported annually to the Board and we will appoint a Trustee as the member responsible for complaints.

The statutory Complaint Handling Code took effect from 1st April 2024 and we have updated our Complaints Policy to reflect the expectations of the code in full.

A copy of KCHA's Complaints Policy & Procedure 2024 can be found here www.kcha.org.uk/complaints

Complaints 2023—2024

During the year 2023/2024 KCHA have received and investigated four complaints through our two-stage complaint handling process.

All four complaints were responded to within target timescales as set out in our Complaints Policy and Procedure.

Below is an overview of our complaints:

2023-2024 4 Complaints received (4 in 2022-2023)	2 complaints (50%) were escalated to Stage 2
All 4 complaints were responded to on target and within timescales (100%)	1 Complaint (25%) was upheld at stage 2

N.B—There are two stages in our complaint process.

The first stage is **making a formal complaint** and this will be investigated by the Housing Services Manager who will respond to findings with steps taken.

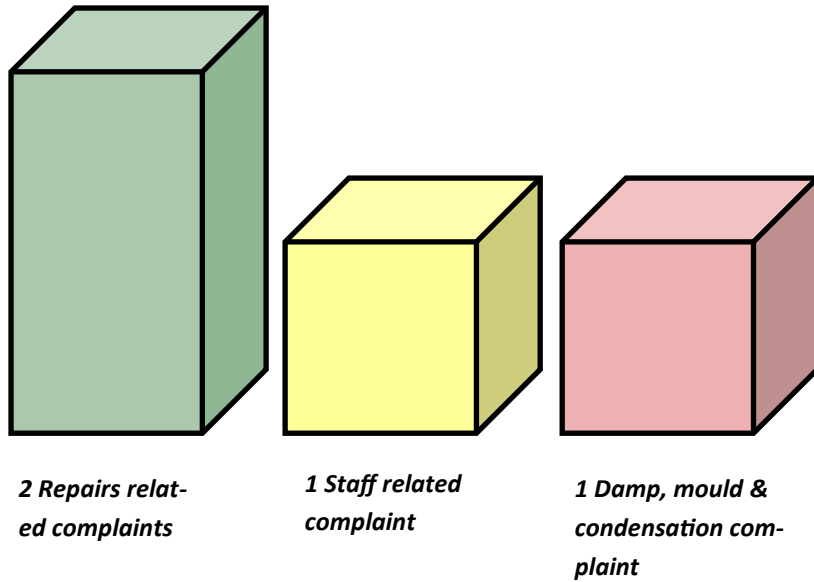
The second stage of the complaint process is **Escalating the complaint**. If you are unhappy with the response received at stage 1, this can then be escalated to stage 2 of our complaints process, which will be responded to and investigated by the Chief Executive.

If however you feel your complaint remains unresolved following response at stage 2, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Further details for the Housing Ombudsman can be found here:

www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Complaints 2023—2024 (Trends)



<u>Complaint type</u>	<u>Stage of complaint</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Within timescales</u>
Repairs	Stage 1	Upheld	Yes
Repairs	Stage 1	Not upheld	Yes
Staff	Stage 2	Upheld	Yes
Damp, Mould & Condensation	Stage 2	Not upheld	Yes

As a smaller Landlord, we do not receive large numbers of complaints. There was no correlation or trends found when assessing the complaints data.

However, all complaint types have been thoroughly assessed and reviewed for learning and service improvement outcomes and to ensure fairness and confidentiality in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Service Improvements

Learnings Identified for improvement:

- To improve our record keeping and accuracy in recording information.
- Where possible, respond and investigate as soon as possible.
- Open, honest and transparent communication.
- Training for staff on dealing and investigating complaints.
- Review/update of Complaints Policy & Procedure
- Completing “lessons learnt” following any complaint or expression of dissatisfaction of service.
- Regular meetings with contractors to ensure customer service excellence and what this looks like to KCHA.
- Flexibility in the way we communicate with our residents. Understanding what our residents want.
- The current Data we hold on tenants.
- Ensuring that information is easily available for tenants and up to date. (Website, quarterly newsletter)
- Identifying service improvement suggestions from Surveys and data held.
- A “one size fits all” approach, does not work.

Improvements implemented so far:

- Updated Complaints Policy to reflect the expectations of the code in full.
- Staff are booked onto a full days course on complaint handling and eLearning provided by the Housing Ombudsman.
- Implementation of new complaints register meaning a more streamlined and effective way of managing complaints.
- Where possible, asking our tenants how they would like us to contact them.
- Updating contact data we hold for our tenants. (Email addresses, telephone numbers, NOK details)
- “How did we do” giving tenants the opportunity to feedback on the service they received.
- Currently in the process of recruiting a tenant board member to be a voice for tenants and help make decisions on the service delivered.
- Compensation (See page 7)
- Tailoring our service to each individual tenant, the personal touch.

Following the Tenant Satisfaction Survey completed last year (2023) only 54% of tenants were satisfied with the way we handle complaints. We have worked hard to implement changes to the way we handle complaints for our tenants and this work will be ongoing. This data doesn't reflect the regular survey calls we undertake and work around this has identified some misunderstanding of the question on the TSM survey. However, this is important feedback to enable us to work with our tenants to address this and satisfaction and service improvement going forward.

Complaints Explained—Defining a complaint

There can, at times be some confusion around what a complaint is and what a service request can be. Reports of ASB can also be deemed as a complaint so I wanted to explain this further for clarity.

Defining a complaint

Following the Introduction of the Housing Ombudsman’s new complaint handling code in 2024, a complaint is universally defined as:

“An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.”

Service requests

A service request is when we are initially advised of a problem and are given the opportunity to put things right, however residents will be given the opportunity to raise a formal complaint immediately. Many problems can be resolved by staff without the need to refer the matter as a formal complaint. Service requests are recorded, monitored and reviewed in a similar way to formal complaints, and some residents prefer this.

When we have failed to put things right and the individual remains dissatisfied, including when the service request response is ongoing, a formal complaint will be recorded in our complaints register in line with our complaints policy. At this point the resident or any 3rd party acting on their behalf is not required to use the word “complaint” for it to be recorded as such.

ASB Cases

When you or someone else is experiencing Anti Social Behaviour, this can also get confused with being recorded as a complaint. Although this is a complaint of Anti Social behaviour, it is investigated as an Anti Social Behaviour case, not a complaint.

Anti social behaviour is anything that causes alarm, distress, nuisance or annoyance to a person.

Reports received of Anti—Social behaviour will be investigated as such, and in line with our ASB policy. For more information on our ASB Policy, this can be found on our website www.kcha.org.uk

All complaints are treated with the strictest confidentiality and in line with Data protection.

Compensation

KCHA aims to provide a high quality service. We have set ourselves performance targets in key areas. These are set out in our Customer Services document. We do accept however, things can occasionally go wrong and as a result, our customers may suffer inconvenience, distress or loss. In these circumstances, we believe it may be appropriate to award compensation.

KCHA have a compensation policy which is available on our website, this provides further information.

Compensation will be paid on a discretionary, case by case basis.

Examples of circumstances that may lead to compensation being awarded:

- Failure to keep an appointment without reasonable notice.
- Failure to complete certain repairs within our agreed timescales.
- Failure to provide the required quality of service resulting in distress or inconvenience.
- Failure to deliver a service for which a specific charge is made.
- Damage to tenants' decorations, fittings and fixtures during repair or improvement work.

Compensation pay scales

	<u>Amount</u>
Missed appointment by a KCHA member of staff	£20.00
Failure to provide the required quality of service resulting in distress or inconvenience	£20.00 up to £250.00 (Chief exec discretion above £250)
Failure to provide a service for which a particular charge is made	£20.00 up to £250.00 (Chief exec discretion above £250)
Damage to tenants' decorations, fittings and fixtures during re-	£20.00 up to £250.00 (Chief
work	exec discretion above £250)

Please see below table for payment award scales.

We regularly review our Policies and processes and always look for ways we can continue to improve our services to customers.

For further information on this or anything else, please contact Heather Nash—Housing Services Manager