

<b>Meeting:</b> Board Wednesday, July 02 2025	<b>Author:</b> Darren Bird – head of housing, customer support and repairs.  Alex Clark – senior customer complaints specialist
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## **Purpose**

To update the board and provide assurance on the management of customer complaints and compliments during 2024/25, including compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, key performance data, and service improvements.

This paper is for information only.

## **Executive summary**

In 2024/25, Selwood Housing made strong progress in managing complaints and improving services, despite wider sector challenges. The year saw improved performance in response times, increased tenant satisfaction, and a continued focus on learning from complaints to drive meaningful change.

Key highlights include:

### **Complaint Volumes**

- Total complaints decreased by 3%, despite rising volumes across the housing sector.

### **Responsiveness**

- 98% of Stage one and Stage two complaints were responded to within target timescales (up from 92% and 89% respectively).

### **Tenant Satisfaction**

- Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) rose to 55% (up from 46%), placing Selwood Housing in the top quartile.

### **Service Improvements**

- 10 service improvements have been implemented or are scheduled for delivery.
- Continued strengthening of complaint oversight via the Customer Complaints Forum, now in its second year.

## **Disrepair and Ombudsman Activity**

- Disrepair claims remained steady, with only one case resulting in compensation.
- Ombudsman involvement remained low, with two minor maladministration findings.

These are excellent outcomes, especially in the current climate. With disrepair claims and Ombudsman complaints rising nationally, maintaining low volumes and only minor findings demonstrates strong service delivery, effective early intervention, and a clear focus on getting things right for residents.

## **Link to strategies**

The management of complaints supports Selwood Housing's Corporate Strategy 2025–28 by delivering on its commitment to being customer-driven, accountable, and responsive. Effective complaint handling helps the organisation respond quickly to customer needs, improve services, and ensure that customer feedback informs ongoing improvements.

## **Financial impact**

There is no significant financial impact, aside from costs associated with maladministration findings and related compensation for non-compliant complaints.

## **Risk**

Effective complaints management mitigates the strategic risk Customer service (22), repairs and maintenance (46) and inappropriate strategic direction (8).

Failure to manage complaints effectively or comply with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code poses several risks. These include reputational damage from published maladministration findings, regulatory scrutiny or enforcement, and financial costs due to compensation or legal escalation.

## **Staff & culture**

No organisational changes are proposed. The organisation has the right skills in place, with ongoing development supported through complaint learning.

## **Customers**

The impact on customers is positive, with improved complaint response times, clearer communication, and service improvements based on feedback. Customer views are captured through complaints, the Rant & Rave platform, and the Customer Complaints Forum. Details of their work can be found on our website: <https://www.selwoodhousing.com/get-involved/our-customer-complaints-forum/>. These have directly led to changes to grounds maintenance, improved repair processes, and clearer service information.

There is no evidence to suggest that different customer groups are disproportionately affected.

## **Regulation, Legal or Compliance**

The report demonstrates Selwood Housing's adherence to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, a regulatory framework that ensures fairness, transparency, and timeliness in complaint resolution.

No policy changes were deemed necessary during the reporting year. Only two policy complaints were received, both of which were not upheld. These related to health and safety and the clear corridor policy, and after review, no amendments were made.

In line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, Selwood Housing has appointed a board member as the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC). Hannah Jones holds this role and has worked closely with the team over the past year, providing valuable oversight and assurance on the effectiveness of our complaints handling. Her involvement has included regular reviews of performance, analysis of trends and outcomes, and a formal presentation of our year-end results. This collaboration has reinforced our commitment to strong complaints management and continuous improvement.

## **Housing Ombudsman**

In 2024/25, the ombudsman reviewed nine complaints relating to Selwood Housing. Seven were found to be compliant, while two resulted in maladministration findings, leading to apology letters and modest compensation payments of £125 and £150. These outcomes underline the need to maintain high standards in complaint handling to prevent escalations and minimise financial or reputational risks.

## **Options**

The Board note the report.

## **Future actions and monitoring**

A six-monthly interim report on compliments and complaints will be produced for GADC.

**Appendix A** - statistical information

**Appendix B** – top complaint reasons

**Appendix C** - learning outcomes and service improvements

## Appendix A - Statistical information

Description	2023/24	2024/25
Number of complaints received	397	372
Stage One complaints received	333	323
Stage Two complaints received	64	53
Stage One complaints resolved within timescales	92%	98%
Stage Two complaints resolved within timescales	89%	98%
Complaints upheld	69%	73%
Policy complaints received	6	2
Policy complaints upheld	0	0
Ombudsman reviews conducted	8	9
Ombudsman reviews compliant	6	7
Ombudsman reviews resulting in maladministration	2	2
Compensation payments due to maladministration	£100 and £200	£125 and £150
Compliments received	254	276
Rant & Rave responses	5,763	5,388
% of Rant & Rave responses rated 4 or 5	88%	90%
Disrepair cases received	11	8
Disrepair liability accepted	0	1
Disrepair liability denied	11	7
Disrepair compensation paid	£0	£500

## Appendix B – Top five complaint reasons

Description	Number of complaints	% of overall complaints
Responsive repairs	106	28%
Staff attitude	32	9%
Discretionary payments	30	8%
Planned maintenance or cyclical works	29	8%
Improvement works carried out by landlord or tenant	22	6%

Complaints are categorised to reflect the most common causes of dissatisfaction. The top five categories account for 59% of all complaints received. Responsive repairs have generated the most complaints, which is typical in the sector due to the high volume of repairs conducted annually (approximately 28,000). Despite this, responsive repairs also receive high satisfaction ratings through Rant & Rave feedback.

### Responsive repairs

Responsive repairs account for the highest volume of complaints, primarily due to delays in completion, timescales, and concerns about the quality of workmanship.

### Staff Attitude

Complaints relating to staff attitude are spread across various teams within the business. However, the highest number of these cases are concentrated within the neighbourhoods and income teams. This is likely due to the nature of their roles, as both teams are regularly required to deliver messages and decisions that may be unwelcome or difficult for customers to hear, such as enforcement actions or rent-related discussions

### Discretionary Payments

Centres around reimbursement of financial loss and recognition that services haven't reached the desired standard.

## Appendix C - Learning outcomes and service improvements

### 1. Tenancy Onboarding & Home User Guides

Strengthened advice provided to new tenants through enhancements to the Home User Guide, discussed during tenancy start appointments.

### 2. Improving grounds maintenance

Enhancing our grounds maintenance service with regular website updates to keep grass cutting schedules accurate year-round. Extra investment has improved performance, with 100% of cuts completed for several months. A new joint audit process with our contractor ensures standards stay high

### 3. Caretaker service restructure

Bringing together our two caretaker teams into one unified service to improve efficiency and consistency. This restructure will support a new service improvement plan focused on clearer standards, better responsiveness, and higher quality for customers.

### 4. Leaseholder Section 20 Notifications

Now issued via recorded delivery to confirm receipt and minimise the risk of disputes.

### 5. Communal Areas – Christmas Decorations

Proactive engagement with residents through door-knocking and posters to manage expectations and ensure safe, inclusive decoration practices.

### 6. Direct Debit Management – Collaboration Between Finance and Income Teams

Responsibility for managing Direct Debits will transfer to the Income Team upon full implementation of the Dynamics system.

### 7. Repairs Text Message Notifications

Service expanded to include updates on cancellations, delays, contractor referrals, and weather-related disruptions.

### 8. Voids Team Efficiencies

Adoption of a multi-trade repair approach to speed up void turnarounds, reduce repeat visits, and improve service for vulnerable customers, including disrepair claim mitigation.

### 9. Sheltered Housing – Data Protection and Privacy Awareness

Staff training and resident newsletter content now promote awareness around private conversations and data protection.

### 10. Response team skills enhancement

We're introducing skill levels to our multi-skilled operatives, ensuring the right person attends each job to improve first-time fix rates and reduce repeat visits.