

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024/25



September 2025



Dolphin Living



Board Statement

Statement from the Governing Body as overseen by the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)- Ben Laryea

Our residents are at the heart of everything we do at Dolphin Living. Our primary charitable objective is to support London's workers on modest incomes who cannot afford to rent or buy a home near their place of work. We're proud of our close relationship with our residents and the role they play in making our organisation what it is today.

As the Member Responsible for complaints, I am pleased to receive the second annual Self-Assessment and Housing Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report. This report builds on the findings of last year's report and offers valuable insights into complaints and performance for Dolphin Living.

I have discussed the self-assessment and report with the Customer Services Director and been fully informed of the changes that have been made to the complaints handling process and policy. Over the past year these have included:

- An increase in resident materials detailing the complaints process.
- The introduction of a specialist complaints handling manager, who is now able to provide a more resident focused approach as all complainants receive a 1:1 follow-up upon receipt of their complaint. This role is also driving an emphasis on learning from complaints across our organisation and with our Managing Agent.
- Alongside the Customer Services Director, our Stage 2 Complaints are now reviewed by a director who sits outside of our operational processes. This brings another level of challenge during the review of the complaint.

During 2025/26 the specialist complaints handling manager will be working closely with our Managing Agent to reduce the number of Stage 1 complaints that are escalated to Stage 2. Our complaint and compensation policies are also kept under continual review.

While the report reflects a reduction in overall complaint volume from 2023/24, it is important to note that we are introducing more ways for our residents to make complaints by increasing resident awareness of the service. We have an on-going commitment to promote transparency in complaints handling.

We embrace complaints and this report underscores our shared dedication to deliver great services while continuously learning and adapting to meet the needs of our residents.



Finally, thank you to all residents who have given feedback this year. It is only through working with you that we can continue to improve so thank you for your time and your openness.

Executive Summary

This report outlines the annual complaint performance for financial year 2024/25 and the key learnings and service improvements made following the resolutions of complaints. The report is a requirement of the Housing Ombudsman Handling Code.

Please note: Dolphin Living as a charity has a number of entities. One of these is Dolphin Housing Limited (DHL) which is a Registered Provider (RP). Under the RP we have 153 homes. For the purposes of this report, to allow us to provide significant quantitative and qualitative data, we have used all complaints received across Dolphin Living. We take the best practice approach and apply the Housing Ombudsman Handling Code across our portfolio regardless of tenancy type.

Complaints performance – 2024/25

Total complaints received:	47
• Stage 1 complaints	35
• Stage 2 complaints	12
% of complaints progressed to stage 2	25%
% of complaints responded to within Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code timescales	100%
Number of Housing Ombudsman determinations	0
Number of refused complaints	0

This year saw the introduction of new approaches to learning from our complaints which has resulted in a reduction in complaints received compared to 2023/24 when we received 52.

We are proud to report that no instances of non-compliance with the Code have been identified by the Ombudsman. We remain committed to continuously improving the services we provide to our residents, learning not just from complaints but from listening to our residents across all service points.

It is important to us that our complaint process is accessible to our residents and work has taken place this year to ensure that residents are more aware of the complaints process and feel comfortable contacting us about concerns.

Staff changes have resulted in a closer working relationship with our Managing Agent-Touchstone to ensure that we can provide the right support to our residents during the complaints process. We recognise that we need to improve the resolution of complaints at Stage 1.

In line with the HOS Complaint Handling Code, a self-assessment against the requirements of the Code has been completed and it has been determined that our Complaints Policy and processes are fully compliant with the Code requirements.

Background

This annual report is a requirement following the publication of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code 2024 (section 8.1). Landlords (for housing providers with under 1000 units) are required to complete an annual complaints performance and service improvement report, to share this report with their Board, and to publish the report, with a response from the Board, on their website by no later than 30th September each year.

This report includes:

- The annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code to ensure our complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.
- An analysis of Dolphin Living's complaint handling performance.
- The service improvements made learning from our complaints.





Complaints Performance 2024/25



Complaints Received 1ST April 2024 – 31st March 2025

TOTAL COMPLAINTS - 47

35

Stage 1 Complaints

12

Stage 2 Complaints

25%

of Complaints
escalated to Stage 2

100%

of Complaints
responded to within
Handling Code

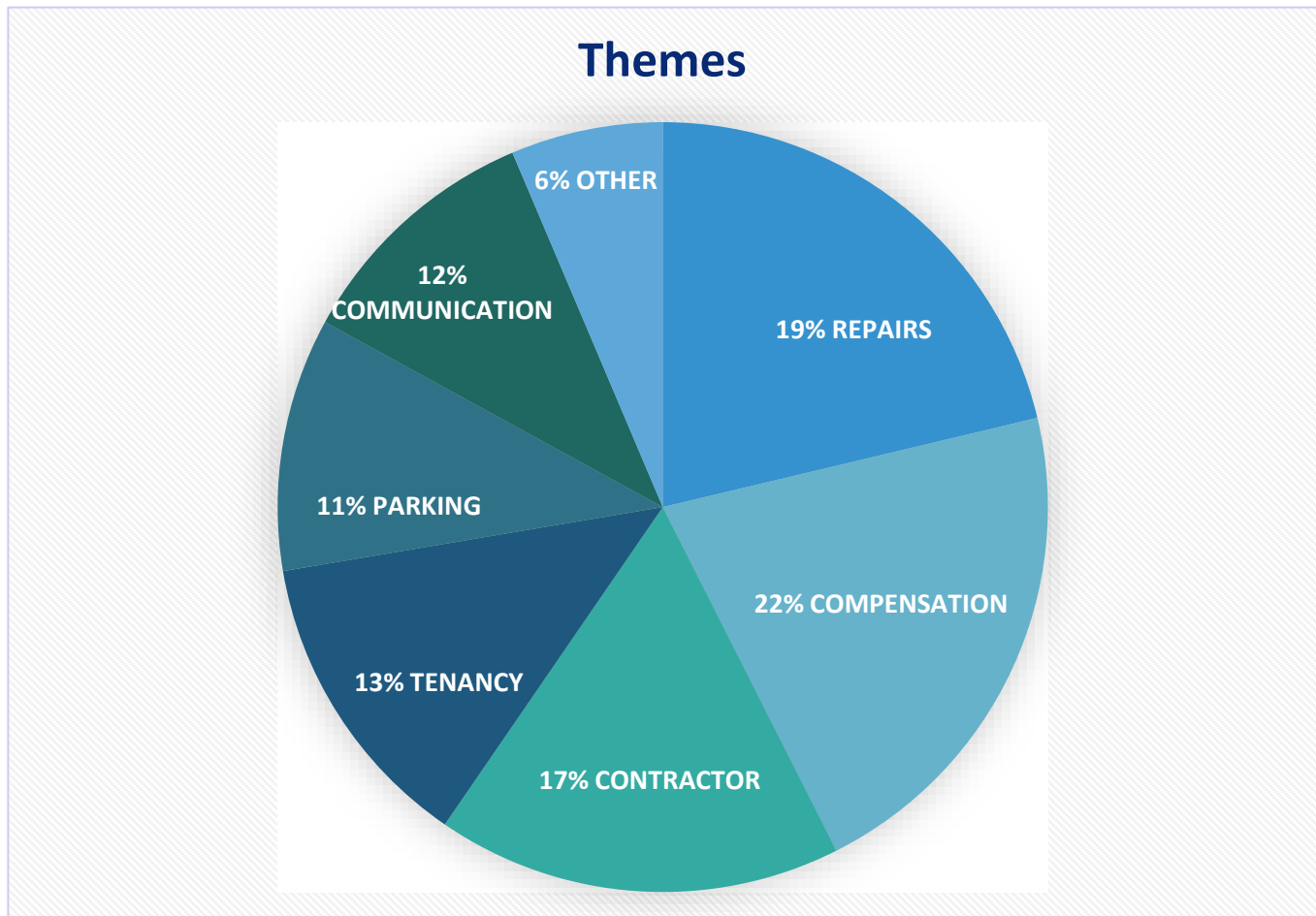
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Determinations from
the Housing
Ombudsman

76%

of Complaints
upheld/partially
upheld

Complaint Themes



Complaint themes summary

Repairs: Hot water outages accounted for 5 of the repair complaints. We recognise that our updates to residents during this time need to be more proactive and include a greater level of detail. The remaining 4 complaints were regarding delays and the quality of the repair. Keeping our residents updated throughout the repairs process is key to increasing satisfaction levels and trust.

Compensation payments: We received 5 complaints about the delay residents experienced receiving heating/hot water compensation payments. This was due to issues in our internal processes which resulted in unacceptable delays in payments to our residents and due to residents not being aware of our compensation timelines. Clearer communication &

transparency with our residents would have reduced the level of complaints received. We have since improved our processes for paying residents compensation.

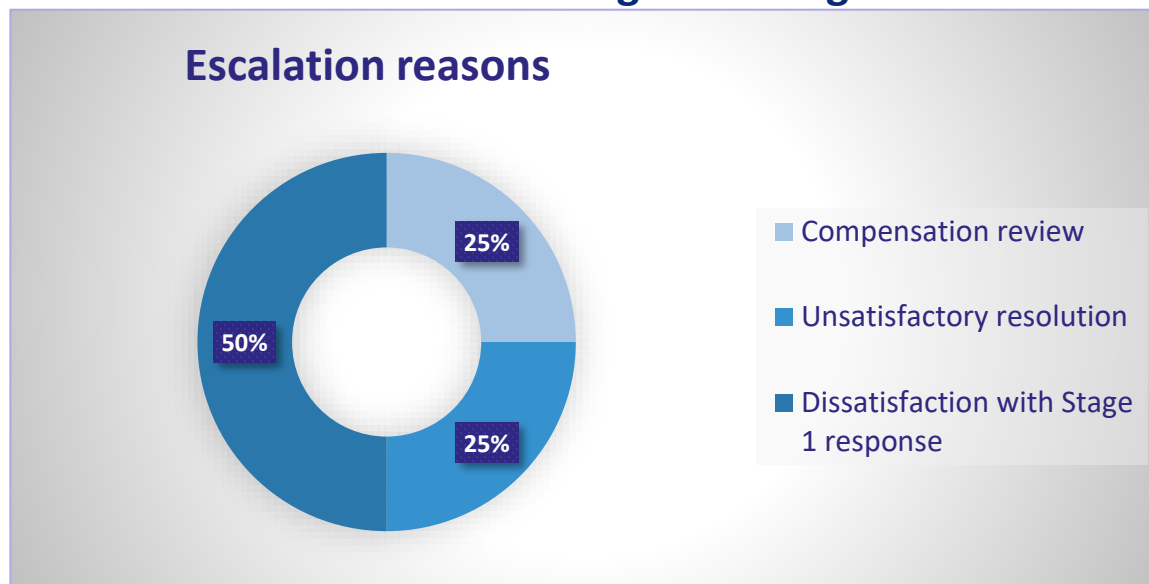
Contractors: The interaction our contractors have with residents is paramount in the repairs process and we need to be aware of each resident's preferred method of contact. Four complaints were made in relation to residents dissatisfied with the contractor's communication and 1 in relation to a resident's privacy and the use of a master key.

Tenancy: Three complaints were tenancy-related issues which are usually complex as they require bespoke solutions. These service requests will be dealt with by Dolphin Living and not our Managing Agent.

Parking: We have a limited number of parking spaces which are in high demand. Our Parking policy includes management of the waiting list with priority factors. However, the 4 residents were dissatisfied with the lack of updates in relation to their place on the waiting list.

Communication: There were 2 complaints relating to dissatisfaction with the receipt of a rent letter and a heating bill.

Drivers for escalation from Stage 1 to Stage 2



We acknowledge that 25% of our Stage 1 complaints being escalated to Stage 2 is an area for improvement. This year we shall be working on reducing the number of Stage 1 escalations to ensure that our residents are satisfied earlier during the complaints process.

This will include reviewing responses to ensure that follow-up actions are completed and that responses address all issues raised in the complaint.

Customer Feedback



43%

**Resident satisfaction with
our approach to
Complaints Handling**

We encourage feedback from our residents and receive feedback from a range of sources, including our annual customer surveys, ongoing customer satisfaction surveys, resident engagement meetings, 1-2-1 home visits, and suggestions from our teams & Managing Agent.

Our residents who had cause to complain during the year commented:

**Thank you for taking the
time to visit and for your
detailed reply to my
Stage 2 complaint.**

**Thank you for
thoroughly reviewing
the complaint &
assuring us that changes
have been made.**

**Thank you for your
thorough investigation.**

**Thank you for your
continued support
regarding the ongoing
issues.**

Service Improvement & Learning

During the year we have focused on using the lessons learned from residents' complaints to continue to improve our services.

- **Repair service and communication**

Following our repairs review, we have amended our repairs standard to address common resident complaints, such as too many contractors visiting and a lack of follow-up during and after repair works are completed. We have introduced a specialist role for managing damp and mould cases in readiness for the implementation of Awaab's Law which will apply to Social Housing Providers from October 2025.

- **Complaint handling**

We have introduced a specialist complaints handler responsible for managing our Stage 2 investigations and overseeing the learning from complaints. Learning is shared with our Managing Agents to ensure continuous improvement.

For complex complaints requiring input from multiple departments, action plans have been introduced with agreed outcomes shared with the complainant.

- **Understanding our residents' individual needs**

As well as increasing our number of 1-2-1 home visits we have recently launched a new Inclusion, Diversity and Equality survey. The feedback from this survey will assist us in tailoring our services based on individual needs.

- **Communication**

Clear, timely and frequent communication with our residents is essential when providing a service or when repairs are taking longer than expected. We will ensure that residents are kept updated of any delays in completing a service request.

- **Accessing our complaints service**

We are compiling a new resident's guide which will include the complaints process. We have also introduced a 'guide to complaints' leaflet which has been distributed to all noticeboards. We are also upgrading our website this year, which will include a section on complaints and specifically the complaints process.

- **Residents' privacy**

We have reviewed and updated our Access Policy to ensure residents provide explicit permission before entering their homes unless there is an emergency.

- **Keeping our promises**

When resolving complaints, promises were often made but not actioned. This has led to disappointment and a reduction of trust in our ability to address residents' concerns

effectively. We now review all ongoing repairs and outstanding actions with our Managing Agent and have introduced additional meetings for this purpose.

- **Review of Stage 1 complaints**

We will be working closely with our Managing Agent to review the Stage 1 responses to ensure that we reduce the level of escalation to Stage 2. This will be carried out by the Dolphin Living complaint's lead.

As we reflect on the progress made this year, we acknowledge that there are areas that we need to improve. We will seek to continue to improve through working with our residents.

For more information on our complaints and feedback handling process:

Contact us



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