TEACHERS' HOUSING ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2024-2025

Board and Member Responsible for Complaints statement:

The Board and Member Responsible for Complaints have reviewed the report and the self-assessment in line with the Complaints Handling Code.

At Teachers Housing Association (THA) we view complaints positively, and welcome the opportunity to listen to our tenants, learn, put things right where they go wrong, and make improvements in how we deliver services.

The Board recognise there is still much work to be done before complaints performance reaches satisfactory levels, in particular our communication with residents and responding to complaints in a timely manner.

The changes to policy, procedure and training which have been implemented in 2024/25 have laid solid foundations to improve performance but do not produce instant results. We expect to see the impact of these changes in the complaint handling performance and satisfaction this coming year.

The MRC and Board will remain focussed on oversight and scrutiny of complaints handling and underlying causes to drive a culture of continuous improvement.

Introduction:

At Teachers Housing Association complaints are an important part of how we learn and improve the services we provide to our Tenants.

Sometimes things go wrong, and customers may be dissatisfied and wish to let us know.

If something does go wrong, we will listen, apologise, investigate what happened and work with the customer to make it right.

We understand that we must improve on how we listen and respond to complaints. It is only through improving how we receive and act on feedback that we will improve satisfaction and the overall customer experience.

During 2024/2025 we have successfully recruited a new permanent Executive and Senior Management team. Listening to our tenants and learning from complaints are key areas of focus.

During the Roadshows held in early 2025 tenants told us areas we needed to improve included communications, ensuring value for money, the repairs service and organisational effectiveness such as roles and responsibilities for staff. These themes are echoed in the complaints we received, and whilst we clearly have work to do, we are confident that our plans for 2025/2026 will deliver positive changes.

Annual Self-Assessment:

We complete a self-assessment to measure compliance of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. For the period from April 2024 to March 2025 we are reporting full compliance against the code. A copy of our Self-Assessment can be found on our website.

Complaint handling performance in 2024/2025

For the year from April 2024 to the end of March 2025 there were:

Complaints received at Stage 1 of our complaints process	52
Complaints responded to within required timescales	56%
Complaints upheld or partially upheld at Stage 1	87%

The category and percentage of complaints received at Stage 1 included:

- 8% related to how we dealt with anti-social behaviour
- 15% related to how we dealt with damp and mould
- 19% related to rent and service charges
- 6% related to staff conduct
- 12% related to tenancy issues
- 40% related to repairs and maintenance

  In 33% of the cases responded to, the complainant was not satisfied with Teachers Housing Associations reply at Stage 1 of the Complaints Policy and they asked for their complaint to be escalated to Stage 2.

For the year from April 2024 to the end of March 2025 there were:

Complaints escalated to Stage 2	17
Complaints responded to within required timescales	65%
Complaints upheld or partially upheld at Stage 2	94%

The category and percentage of complaints escalated to Stage 2 included:

- 23% damp and mould
- 18% rent and service charges
- 12% staff conduct
- 12% tenancy
- 35% repairs and maintenance

There were no complaints refused for this period.

There was one case which progressed to the Housing Ombudsman case in 2024/25 however this was deemed to be outside their jurisdiction.

There were no determinations made for THA during 2024/25, and we are reporting no findings of non-compliance against the Code.

Improvements and Learning from complaints

Learning from complaints is key to improving our services which have included:

Administration and performance

- Reviewing our standard letter templates to ensure a better customer focused response which remained compliant with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman.
- Introducing a specific complaints and compliments email address complaintsandcompliments@teachershousing.org.uk
- Reviewing our tracking and monitoring of complaints, improving processes.
- Delivering complaint training to all staff highlighting key themes and lessons learned from complaints for THA and those from the Ombudsman though spotlight reports.

Communication and contact

- Recruiting to a Customer Service Officer role to improve enquiry response times and enhance customer service.
- Developing a new website, which is planned to be launched in September 2025, which will include more information for tenants and improved navigation

Anti-social behaviour

- Focusing on upskilling staff with additional knowledge and resources to support with responses to reports of Anti-Social Behaviour which has included reviewing and updating our policy and procedures; attending training; joining a national specialist organisation who are community safety experts and can provide training and support.

Damp and Mould

- Increasing our staffing resources and recruiting a permanent Repairs Manager, who has oversight of damp and mould cases.
- Reviewing our reporting and management of cases, with cases now being triaged through a single point of contact and part of our regular management reporting.
- Sourcing additional specialist contractors to ensure we can quickly complete damp and mould surveys as required, to subsequently raise works, and take actions to be ready for the implementation of the requirements of Awaabs Law.

Rent and Service Charges

- Making minor adjustments to rent and service charge information, pending a wider review of the information we share with our Tenants during this coming year.
- Apologising as part of our Tenant Roadshows held in January / February 2025 for not explaining as well as we could, the impact on external factors such as utility costs increasing had on our service charges.
- Reviewing our standard arrears letters, and recruiting to an additional post of Income Officer to manage the arrears process.

Staff conduct

- Reviewing our staff training needs and have developing an Unacceptable Behaviour Policy to support with challenging behaviour which is not acceptable, and to recognise we want to work with our Tenants to resolve issues with them in an effective way.
- Scoping customer service and professional boundaries training to be delivered to staff during 2025/2026

Tenancy Issues

- Recognising information we provide to our tenants needs to improve and be clearer for tenancy matters. We are devising a new website, and part of our planned improvements will include more information available online. This is part of our work plan for the coming year.

Repairs

- Recruiting to a new role of Repairs Manager recognising Repairs is one of the priority areas for us to improve.
- Reviewing the Contractors we use and have improving contractor management with increasing focus on the quality of works.
- Planning the development of a code of conduct for contractors working with our Tenants Influence Panel
- Reviewing processes and performance monitoring.

Conclusion

Whilst progress has been made to improve complaint handling and deliver better outcomes for our tenants, we will continue to work with tenants to create more responsive, accountable services. Our focus remains on early resolution, continuous learning, and improving the overall tenant experience

We are using complaints and feedback to drive improvements where they are most needed - particularly in areas such as repairs, communication, rent and service charges and responsiveness

Whilst we have not been cited in any Housing Ombudsman spotlight reports or severe maladministration cases, we recognise the importance of learning from these publications to strengthen our practice and avoid similar failings.