



## **ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2023/24.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In April 2024, the Housing Ombudsman introduced a revised Complaints Handling Code that applies to all registered housing associations and local authorities.

This report covers our compliance with the Code, and our complaints handling performance between 1 October 2023 and 30 September 2024.

We have included within this report:

- Our statement about performance from the Board
- A summary of complaints including the number of complaints received and resolved, and the response times.
- Service improvements and learnings as a result of complaints

Our self-assessment of compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code was completed in July 2024, and is available via our website at <https://sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk/pub/complaints-handling-code-self-assessment.pdf?=1725368986>

### **BOARD STATEMENT**

We are committed to providing the best possible services to residents. Unfortunately, sometimes things go wrong, and it is important that we put things right as soon as we can.

Deputy Chair, Joe Waters who is the Sandbourne Board Member Responsible for Complaints has been part of the production of this report. The report was shared with the Board on 27 November 2024 and their response is as follows:

*“The Board receives a report 6 times a year detailing new complaints that have been received and the progress made with resolving both these and those that have been received previously. This provides the Board with oversight of the way that complaints are being managed, and the opportunity to scrutinise the progress with individual cases.*

*The Board is satisfied that the approach to complaint handling by Sandbourne is a high priority and that we are compliant with the Complaint Handling Code, as evidenced in the self-assessment and the Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report.*

*During the next 12 months we expect to see a continued focus on service improvement and learning outcomes from complaints to ensure that Sandbourne can continue to demonstrate its commitment to providing the best possible service for residents”.*

## COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE 1 OCTOBER 2023 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

Our objectives are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To consistently acknowledge complaints on time.</b> – We acknowledged 96% of complaints on time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To make consistent compensation payments.</b> Where we have offered compensation, this has been in line with the Complaints Handling Code.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The consistent delivery of the complaint service for residents -</b> Changes to the way that we manage complaints through our new policy have maintained consistency in our responses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Effective learning from complaints –</b> So we avoid making the same mistakes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To keep residents informed –</b> Where there have been delays in providing formal responses at stage 1 or stage 2 in all cases, we have kept residents informed of the action we are taking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To protect the health and safety of residents-</b> We assess all complaints that potentially impact on the health and safety of residents</li> </ul>

### Summary of complaints between 1 October 2023 and 30 September 2024

	No	%
Number of complaints received at stage 1	16	
Stage 1 complaints acknowledged in line with the Complaints Handling Code	16	100
Number of complaints responded to	16	100
Stage 1 complaints responded to in line with the Complaints Handling Code	11*	69
Number of complaints received at stage 2	7	
Number of complaints responded to	7	100
Stage 2 complaints responded to in line with the Complaints Handling Code	6**	86

\*In 3 cases a visit was required to inspect and/or collect further information from the tenant. In 1 case the tenant promised to provide additional supporting information and delayed doing so and in the other the stage 1 response was delayed (with the agreement of the tenant) pending the completion of the repairs that were the subject of her complaint.

\*\*The tenant who delayed providing additional information in support of their complaint at stage 1 also did so at stage 2, again delaying our investigation and response.

### **Reasons for complaint.**

The table below shows the areas of service where we receive complaints: Repairs is our largest service and one that residents care about the most

<b>Service area</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
Repair and maintenance of homes	<b>7</b>	<b>44</b>
Management of homes, anti-social behaviour and lettings	<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>
Estate Management (i.e. cleaning and grounds maintenance)	<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>
Home ownership and the resale of homes	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>
Data Protection	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>
Rents and service charges	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>

### **Service Improvements and Learning**

We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve services to residents. As part of our commitment to this, complaints, learning and progress is regularly discussed within the team and where appropriate our contractors and third-party suppliers.

Some examples of how we use this feedback to make improvements include:

Reports of damp and mould. Where we have undertaken works following reports of damp and or mould, we now contact the resident after 4 weeks to check that these have been effective and no further follow up inspection or work is necessary.

We are reminding residents that we will prioritise the replacement of misted double-glazed windows in living rooms but work to other windows may need to be delayed until the following financial year.

Following several reports received from residents of calls that they had from an organisation claiming to be 'The Housing Disrepair Team' we reminded residents that they should report any repairs that they have to Sandbourne, and not anyone else claiming to be working on behalf of housing associations.

### **Housing Ombudsman**

During the reporting period the Housing Ombudsman did not issue Sandbourne with any non-compliance findings in relation to the Code.

The Housing Ombudsman has produced an annual report on Sandbourne's performance which is available on our website.

One report was produced by the Housing Ombudsman in relation to Sandbourne in the period, the outcome of which is detailed in their annual report.

In the reporting period one complaint had been referred to the Housing Ombudsman and we were awaiting their determination.