



Alpha Living's Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

Governing Body's Response 2026



At the Board Meeting on 15th September Nick Cumberland was confirmed as Alpha's Member Responsible for Complaints

"I am delighted to have been appointed as Alpha's Member Responsible for Complaints. The purpose of the role is to champion a positive complaint handling culture within the organisation, and to have oversight of complaints performance. I view this as an important role, and I want to ensure that Alpha's residents receive the best possible service and that when our service falls below our

high standards the issues are treated with sensitivity and are resolved swiftly. The role provides assurance to the Board on the success of its complaints system. This includes challenging data and information provided to the Board.

I am pleased to have received the annual report summarising complaint activity during 2025–26. The report demonstrates how Alpha has considered resident feedback from complaints, Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM), resident listening sessions and wider feedback to gain a better picture of what residents are telling us is working well and where we can make improvements.

The annual TSM results highlighted a gap between the number of residents who perceived that they had made a complaint and the number of complaints recorded. I am pleased to see the additional training that is being rolled out with all colleagues to ensure that all dissatisfaction is recorded as a complaint where it relates to service standards or the actions of Alpha's colleagues or contractors.

Listening sessions have also given residents more opportunities to raise concerns directly with Alpha which has increased the visibility of dissatisfaction, but importantly it also gives us more information to learn from and more opportunities to put things right.

The self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code demonstrates that Alpha is broadly compliant with some areas of good practice and some areas that require strengthening. This will be a focus of my work with the operational team in understanding how those gaps will be closed. As part of this work, the current Complaints Policy and Procedure are being reviewed.

Looking towards the future it will be interesting to see how emerging digital technologies such as AI generated complaints affect Alpha and what impact the Ombudsman's newly established process for Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs) complaints will have."

Director of Operations Summary

This report provides members with an overview of complaints performance for 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, including what residents complained about, what we have learned and what we are doing differently as a result.

There were 27 complaints recorded within the year, all of which were resolved at stage one except one complaint relating to an equipment failure which was escalated to stage two and was subsequently resolved in August 2026. No complaints were escalated to the Housing Ombudsman service during the year demonstrating that our process of hearing and resolving complaints within the Alpha process is working.

Complaint themes identified include dissatisfaction with repairs, communication, housing management and service delivery. Communication is a cross-cutting factor present in many of the complaints received. In several cases, the original issue may have been a repair or another service problem, but the resident's poor experience was compounded by a lack of update or clarity of information leading to the service issue resulting in a complaint.

Examining the data has highlighted that the headline number of complaints should not be viewed in isolation and that further investigation is required to provide context. Several complaints can relate to one underlying service issue. St Peters Court, for example, had 3 complaints relating to water pressure and temperature. This represents 22% of the total number of complaints received during the year.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

Our Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) results for 2025/26 have also highlighted a gap between residents' perception that they have made a complaint and the number of complaints formally recorded. This has led us to look more closely at how we recognise

dissatisfaction and whether concerns are sometimes being dealt with, without being recorded as a complaint.



The Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code

Alpha has adopted the Housing Ombudsman definition of a complaint 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.”

A significant amount of work has already started to strengthen our processes, this includes improving complaints recording within Civica CX our housing management system, clearer information for residents, reviewing our policies and increasing resident involvement in the process of thematic complaint reviews.

A self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code has been undertaken which has found that Alpha is broadly compliant and identifies several positive areas of practice. However, the assessment highlights that some areas require strengthening to ensure the policy, procedure and supporting evidence consistently reflect both the requirements of the Code and Alpha's day-to-day practice. Work is underway to close those gaps.

Board Member Feedback

Members were asked to note the self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman code and to provide feedback on the assessment results. Members were also asked to note the work underway to improve how we identify, record and learn from complaints, alongside the increased opportunities for residents to tell us when something is not working.

There were several discussion points prompted by the report including:

- What additional external sources of assurance could be provided to confirm compliance with the Complaint Handling Code.
- If the encompassing of all expressions of dissatisfaction under the Ombudsman's definition may cause confusion in complaint reporting.
- If the format of complaints made could be recorded for future reports.
- The impact of Alpha's resident age profile on their likelihood to make a complaint.

Early Indications from Q1 2026 /27

Early 2026/27 figures have been included for context only. Between April and July 2026, 22 complaints were recorded compared with 11 during the same period in 2025/26. Whilst this is a 100% increase, most of that increase happened in April following the introduction of the resident listening sessions. During the sessions information was shared regarding what constitutes a complaint and how complaints can be made. Residents were encouraged to use the complaint system as one of the tools for service improvement.

This evidences a spike following the socialising of the complaints process with the resident community.



Complaint numbers then reduced to six in May and two in June before increasing slightly to four in July. It is still too early to say whether this represents a longer-term increase. What it does tell us is that giving residents more opportunities to speak to us is increasing our visibility of dissatisfaction which is being seen as a positive point.

Next Steps

The annual review has presented us with a clearer understanding of the detail behind the headline complaint data. Combining this with the insight from the listening sessions and TSM responses has allowed us to form a much fuller picture of the end-to-end complaints process. The outcome of the self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Code will be essential in informing the service improvement and strengthening practice.

Our priorities for 2026/27 are therefore to:

- improve complaints recording through Civica CX
- improve our complaints dashboards and reporting
- identify repeat complaints and development hotspots earlier

- improve how we record learning and actions
- check whether actions taken following complaints have been successful
- refresh the Complaints and Compensation Policies
- improve complaints information for residents
- introduce the Resident Complaints Review Forum
- complete resident scrutiny around first-contact communication
- use complaints, TSMs and resident listening together to give us a better picture of resident experience.

Hearing the resident's voice in all aspects of service design, review and improvement will help Alpha shape our services and ensure we are listening to and acting on residents feedback.



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Sarah Houghton- Grimshaw
Director of Operations