



Title:-	Annual Complaints and Service Improvement Report	
Meeting:-	Alpha Board	
Meeting Date:-	20th May 2025	
Author:-	Peter Merity - Director of Housing & Support pmerity@alpha-living.co.uk 0151 343 5879	
Action Required:-	For discussion	
Summary:-	This report is to fulfil our outstanding obligation to produce an Annual Complaints and Service Improvement Report to be published on our website, alongside a response from the board.	
Delivery Plan Objective:-	Number & Title	4 - Taking risks and managing risk - a sustainable business
	Objective	- To fulfil our obligation to the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code.
Risk Assessment:-	Likelihood	3 (medium/low) - net risk
	Impact	2 (medium/low) - net risk
	Comments	
Financial / Value for Money Implications		None directly
Customer Impact / Views		Improve our accountability to residents by ensuring compliance with the Complaints Handling Code
Staffing Implications		Changes to the ombudsman's complaints handling code can be contained within the existing structure
Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Implications (EDIB)		The experience and impacts of discrimination, prejudice and unconscious bias on all minority groups when complaining.

1. **Recommendation**

- 1.1 For members to acknowledge the contents of the report
- 1.2 For members to formally respond to this report via a written statement and the response to be published on our website as required by the Ombudsman's code no later than the end of June 2025.

Report detail

Background

In summer 2023 the previous government introduced the Social Housing (Regulation) Act, the legislation has been designed to deliver the aims of the Social Housing White Paper (2021) around strengthening consumer standards, improving resident engagement and tackling poor performing landlords. This legislation further strengthens the powers of the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman to provide more support to residents and to ensure providers like Alpha Living manage feedback effectively.

As of April 2024, the Housing Ombudsman expects all landlords to produce an Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report. As a specialist older people's housing provider, we have always welcomed feedback from our customers and their families, as it provides us with an opportunity to continually improve what we do and how we do it.

As per the Ombudsman code, our complaints policy reflects a two-stage complaints process, ensuring all complaints are investigated thoroughly and if required, any findings reviewed. Following our two-stage process, should a complainant remain dissatisfied with the outcome, our policy supports the escalation of their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

Summary of complaints received in 2024/2025

During the 2024/25 financial year, 13 formal complaints were recorded, a significant decrease from 25 in the previous year. While this reduction may appear positive, the situation is more nuanced. Many concerns are being addressed informally by on-site development colleagues, which may prevent them from entering the formal complaints process.

This is supported by data from our Tenant Satisfaction Measures. In response to TP09 - satisfaction with the landlord's handling of complaints - 181 residents reported submitting a complaint, despite only 13 being formally logged.

This discrepancy likely stems from a lack of understanding from development-based colleagues that any expression of dissatisfaction, whether communicated formally or informally constitutes a complaint. To address this, we plan to implement training for all colleagues on correctly identifying, recording, and resolving first-contact complaints at development level. This will ensure all service issues are captured and not solely managed by the designated Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC).

Of the 13 recorded complaints, one was submitted anonymously, preventing a full investigation and resulting in its closure without resolution.

Although the remaining 12 complaints related to different themes linked to repairs, anti-social behaviour, colleague conduct and behaviour, AlphaPlus confusion with service availability and payments - the common reoccurring theme throughout all these complaints is poor communication or failure to keep the resident informed.

The data confirms the outcome of complaints in relation to whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

- a total of 13 complaints (Stage 1) were recorded through the Complaints Handling Process during the reporting year
- No complaints escalated to Stage 2
- No complaints were referred to the Housing Ombudsman

34% of total complaints were upheld
42% partially upheld and
24% were not upheld

Service Improvements 2024/25

Where a complaint was upheld or partially upheld, an apology was issued and where appropriate compensation was paid. Where compensation wasn't paid, flowers were sent on behalf of Alpha Living to the complainant along with a letter of apology.

- 1) 100% of all complaints were acknowledged within 5 working days.
- 2) 92% of complaints were closed within the allocated 10 working days (20 days with an agreed extension), which is an improvement from 72% (2023/24)
- 3) Performance and complaints meetings take place to ensure all teams are kept informed on complaints within their service area ensuring a quicker outcome for customers who have raised concerns or made a complaint.

- 4) We continue to carry out bi-annual planned property maintenance inspections (PPMs) to proactively identify all repairs, including those relating to damp and mould.
- 5) Improved our processes around engaging with third parties to ensure a timely response to customers when raising concerns.

Service Improvement Ambitions 2025/26

- 1) To implement the complaints, compliments and concerns case and task within Civica CX.
- 2) Introduce improvements for tracking, monitoring and the classification of complaints, including the development of a complaint's dashboard.
- 3) To introduce the capture of "first-fix" or informal requests to the complaints process to ensure all expressions of dissatisfaction are captured.
- 4) To implement training for all colleagues to correctly identify, record, and resolve first-contact complaints at development level.
- 5) To review our Complaints Compensation Policy in line with customer feedback and scrutiny panel input.
- 6) To carry out a campaign to encourage residents to express their dissatisfaction with services enabling Alpha Living to learn from and improve services as agreed as part of the Living Well; Ageing Well 2025 Strategy.

This report reflects our continued commitment to learn from feedback and delivering tangible improvements for our residents. While the formal complaint numbers have decreased, we acknowledge that informal dissatisfaction is not always being appropriately captured or addressed. This insight has informed our planned actions for the coming year, including staff training, system enhancements, and a stronger emphasis on communication.

By embedding these improvements and fostering a more responsive and transparent culture, we aim to strengthen resident trust, improve service quality, and ensure continued compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code. The Board's support and formal response to this report will be vital in reinforcing our shared commitment to accountability and continuous improvement.