Orchard Housing Society

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT 23-24

A REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS AT **Orchard Housing Society** IN 2023-2024

During 2023 to 2024 we received **15** complaints from **15** residents living in the **61** homes owned by Orchard Housing Society.

**3 Complaints related to guest room facilities and cleaning**

**3 Complaints relating to other tenants and were not considered under the Complaints Policy**

**6 Complaints related to issues arising during the boiler replacement programme**

**1 Complaint related to noise being experienced from the communal lounge**

**1 Complaint relating to the former CEO.**

**1 Complaint relating to a poorly functioning shower.**

In **60%** of the cases, the complainant was not satisfied with OHS response at Stage 1 of the Complaints Policy and they asked for their complaint to be escalated to Stage 2.

**Outcomes at Stage 2**

Of the Complaints escalated, these were considered by the Chair and the Management Committee in order that fair amounts of compensation could be offered to tenants affected by heating and hot water failures. The complaints related to the intermittent failures following the installation of the new boilers. Therefore, the reasonable and proportionate response was to offer financial compensation.

In relation to the Complaint relating to noise disturbance, again due to costs involved in this matter was considered by the Chair and the Management Committee. An acoustic survey was undertaken by an external consultant and remedial works were identified. Soundproofing works commenced in January 2025 but have been slightly delayed due to the discovery of asbestos.

The matter of the former CEO was investigated and managed by the Management Committee and the contract of employment in place was mutually ended.

The poorly functioning shower did not improve following the boiler replacement programme and the tenant has been assessed by the relevant local authority for the installation of a wet room to better meet his needs.

None of our complaints were referred to or investigated by the Housing Ombudsman Service in 2023/24.

**Conclusions:**

As a small community-based provider operating on one site only, OHS is fortunate to enjoy low levels of complaints. The majority of complaints raised in 2023/2024 related to ongoing heating and hot water issues and whilst the installation of the new boiler presented its own issues, the matter is now resolved, and appropriate compensation has been paid to all those affected. Moving forwards and in anticipation of the remaining boiler upgrade programme, an alternative contractor is to be appointed.

The noise issue affecting one property is almost close to conclusion but was delayed due to the requirement for additional asbestos removal works.

**BOARD’S RESPONSE TO THE ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT**

On 12th March 2025the Board received:

• The 23/24 annual complaints performance and service improvement report for residents living in homes owned and managed by OHS

• A further copy of the Complaints Policy previously updated and adopted in March 2024.

• A self-assessment against the new Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024

The Management Committee has a Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) who provides additional assurance to the Board on the effectiveness of OHScomplaints system. The MRC and the Management Committee have considered and approved the self-assessment that OHS complies with all aspects of the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code 2024.

Throughout the year the Management Committee has challenged the data and information provided to the Management Committee. OHSadopts the Housing Ombudsman’s definition of a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction. This gives the Management Committee assurance that OHS are recording an accurate volume of complaints.

Given our size, OHS does not have enough complaints to learn from trends. But our learning from individual complaints shows that communication is a key factor across complaints. The Management Committee will monitor the feedback on communication through the individual complaints reported to the Board during 24/25. In conclusion and to provide reassurance, the Management Committee monitor Complaints at all quarterly MC meetings.