





We always strive to deliver outstanding customer service; however, we understand that things can occasionally go wrong and if they do we want to make things right as soon as possible, learn from what has happened, and do what we can to stop it from happening again.

Our aim is to make sure that our tenants understand their rights when it comes to making a complaint, that we make our processes easy and accessible and ensure our tenants can have their voice heard with an approach to complaint handling that is fair and transparent.

We embrace complaints and we are committed to resolving them quickly and efficiently. This report shows our commitment to a positive complaint handling culture at Flagship and how our approach meets the requirements of the [Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code](#).



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# Self-assessment with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code

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During 23/24 considerable efforts to ensure that Flagship Group align with the newly published statutory Code have been made to ensure best practice in complaint handling.

We've focused on:



Strengthening our complaints policy to ensure it robustly meets all the requirements of the new Code.



Adding the facility to signpost all tenants to complaint handling information when providing customer feedback.



Improving and rolling out new training (in-person and a new e-learning module) which is mandatory for the entire organisation.



Completing document refreshes and procedure updates to ensure staff alignment with the new Code.



Developing a new IT system to manage complaints and help cement the requirements of the new Code firmly within our complaint handling procedures.



During 23/24 we were pleased to receive a positive rating for a complaints audit carried out by KPMG (internal audit provider). Areas of good practice included policies and procedures, communications, thematic analysis, scrutiny and reporting and Board lead involvement. Whilst some minor improvements were identified, this reflects our commitment to a positive complaints handling culture across the organisation. All recommendations were accepted and are being implemented including new solutions to ensure complaints are completed within timescales, new procedure documentation, additional reporting and new supporting technology.

Our Governing Body has frequent oversight of complaints handling performance in monthly dashboards and periodic customer insight reports. It has discussed and approved our annual self-assessment against the Code demonstrating compliance in all areas with one exception at 5.10 (at the time of approval). Process changes and system adaptations to capture disability, neurodivergent conditions and long-term illnesses will better inform reasonable adjustments in these circumstances from June 2024.



The Board approved self-assessment can be viewed in full [here](#).

# Complaints Performance Summary

This year we have made it easier and more accessible to make a complaint.



The top themes were:

 <p>Delay in service or action relating to repairs</p>	 <p>Poor quality of repairs</p>
 <p>Failed repair appointments</p>	 <p>Lack of communication</p>

We responded to

- **95%** of complaints within timescales set out in our policy at stage 1 (up from 87% in 22/23)
- **79%** of complaints within timescales set out in our policy at stage 2 (up from 76% in 22/23)

And

- **7.5%** of complaints were escalated to stage 2
- **64.3%** of complaints at stage 1 were partially or fully upheld

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There are some things that we do not consider to be a complaint.

These are:

- ✗ A service request; when we have been asked to take action and put something right (which we have not previously failed to address)

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- ✗ Complaints where the issue occurred over twelve months ago

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- ✗ Something we have no control over, such as Local Authority property allocations

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- ✗ Complaints that have already been considered under our complaints policy

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- ✗ Insurance claims for damages and/or legal proceedings (associated complaints regarding service failures are not excluded in these cases)

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- ✗ Matters already being dealt with by the Ombudsman service



Our complaint scrutiny panel have met with senior leaders and complaint handling staff quarterly during the year to scrutinise our complaint handling performance and review case studies and have made a number of recommendations for improvement which have been progressed or are in progress.

# Engagement with The Housing Ombudsman Service

During the year the HOS issued us with 12 determinations (decisions) for complaints they have reviewed as part of their service (note: determinations may contain multiple outcomes listed above):



## Outcomes

No Maladministration	15
Service Failure	9
Maladministration	15
Severe Maladministration	0

There were no findings of non-compliance with the Housing Ombudsman’s Code during 23/24.

During 2023 we received our landlord complaint report for the previous year. This report gave a 23% maladministration rate and Flagship Group were said to have performed “very well when compared to similar landlords by size and type”. We have shared this report with our staff, Boards and tenants and ensure that we continue to focus on learnings from determinations (which we capture) and in helping us understand any systemic causes of failure.

The full report can be read [here](#). Any future landlord complaint reports will be published on the complaints pages of our website.

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# Service Improvements

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We understand the importance of looking beyond addressing individual complaints. Service improvements based on the insights gained from complaints is key and ensuring our tenants receive a better service in future is a focus for the Group and closely monitored by the Board.

Complaints serve as valuable intelligence to identify issues and drive positive changes in service delivery and this year we have put in place a new solution that enables us to record learning from complaints and monitor and measure the impact of improvements.

Transparency and accountability are crucial and enable us to share the broader lessons learned and improvements made to our tenants, staff, committees and Boards.



## This year complainants told us:

### Repair wait times were too long



#### So we...

- ✓ Implemented a brand-new operating system with dynamic scheduling to make our repairs service more efficient.
- ✓ Created a new repairs policy that sets out what tenants can expect from our repairs service and when.
- ✓ Created a "follow on" function that enabled our operatives to book additional repair visits out in the field, removing confusion around when we were coming back.
- ✓ Engaged with subcontractors to help support Flagship Services and Gasway in completing repairs within timescales.

### Communication was poor



#### So we...

- ✓ Brought together two of our contact centres to avoid handoffs and increase the resolution of enquiries at point of contact.
- ✓ Formed a customer first working group and refreshed our customer service training which is being rolled out across the entire business emphasising the importance of contact and frequent communication.
- ✓ On the advice of our complaint's scrutiny panel, ensured our complaint handling teams instigated communications plans to keep tenants updated on the progress of their complaint.
- ✓ Created new **service standards** that clearly set out what tenants can expect and the related timescales for responding to service requests.

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The quality of service was poor, particularly in relation to repairs



So we...

- ✓ Reviewed and changed some of our products (e.g., Showers, extractor fans and mould treatment products) to improve the tenant experience, time on site, reliability and quality.
- ✓ Are now auditing 10% of gas installs and 5% of other gas repairs to improve first-time fix rates, where they are below average, we provide training and support where needed.
- ✓ Conduct assessments to understand operative skills across a selection of trades and jobs with additional training provided to increase their skill set.

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That we missed appointments



So we...

- ✓ Made sure our new repairs solution increased automated communications and now notify tenants when booking a repair, the day before, on the day and on route.
- ✓ Have built a new customer portal which will be deployed during 2024 to ensure all tenant repairs are visible and easy to modify.
- ✓ Are now issuing communications for out of hours appointments to ensure that tenants raising emergency repairs know when we will attend.

And our customer satisfaction said our complaint handling could be improved



So we...

- ✓ Created a new IT solution that aligns with the new Code and provides our complaints handling teams' better visibility, oversight and access to data to enable faster resolution and customer contact.
- ✓ Recruited additional staff within our complaint handling teams to make sure tenants receive the best possible service when making a complaint.



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# Response of the Flagship Board (Governing Body)

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This report demonstrates our ongoing commitment to a positive complaint handling culture and continuous improvement.

The 2024 self-assessment with the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code has been scrutinised by working together with senior leaders through regular and ongoing engagements where complaint handling processes and performance is challenged. The Board recognise that the self-assessment and related evidence provides assurance that complaint handling policies and procedures are robust, and I confirm the Flagship Group Board have discussed and approved the self-assessment and surrounding context in this report.

The Board continue to receive monthly performance information on complaints, and we are pleased to see that during 23/24, 95% of stage 1 complaints were resolved within timescales with only 7.5% escalating to stage 2. This demonstrates efficient complaint handling and efforts to listen and put things right as quickly as possible. The insights gained from complaints are integral to driving positive changes, ensuring transparency, accountability and better service delivery in the future.

By addressing the root causes of complaints and implementing strategic improvements, we aim to enhance the overall service experience for all our customers. Addressing key causes such as repair waiting times, scheduling of appointments and communication has been a strategic focus this year. We know that our repairs service is not where we need it to be, but we are working hard to improve performance, get to repairs more quickly and complete more repairs first time. We are focused on a culture of learning and improvement and complaints continue to drive service improvements, strategic reviews and inform our decision making.

Furthermore, we strive to create an environment where tenants feel empowered to voice their concerns, knowing their feedback is valued and acted upon. Promoting a culture of learning from complaints helps us improve our services continuously, benefiting all stakeholders involved.



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**Rob Bennett**

Non-Executive Director/Member  
Responsible for Complaints (MRC)  
on behalf of the Flagship Group Board



