



Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement
Report
2023 – 2024

Introduction

This report is an internal review of Halo Housing Association's performance into the handling of complaints from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 under the requirements of the new Complaints Handling Code that became statutory on 1st April 2024.

Halo Housing Association is a Specialised Supported Housing (SSH) provider who provide housing to Tenants that have a diagnosis of a learning disability, mental health condition and/or sensory impairment. All Tenants at Halo Housing are in receipt of a care package tailored to their individual needs to facilitate safe and independent living. Halo Housing are significantly involved in partnership working alongside care providers, local authorities and other professionals due to the nature of this arrangement.

This report is the first to be completed under the new statutory code, alongside this report, a self – assessment against the new Complaint Handling Code will also be published.

The key requirements to be included in this report are;

- The annual complaint self-assessment including the governing body's response
- Analysis of complaints performance
- Service improvements made
- Any findings of non-compliance made by The Housing Ombudsman (where applicable)
- The Housing Ombudsman Annual Report or the Landlord (where applicable)
- Any other relevant reports made by The Housing Ombudsman (where applicable)

Halo Housing are keen to use the requirement of this publication as means to display transparency and ownership of complaints that we receive. This report is proportionate to Halo's size and stock level.

Analysis of Complaints Performance

From April 2023 - March 2024 Halo Housing received two complaints through its internal complaints procedure. For the purpose of this report we have used The Housing Ombudsman's complaints categories to identify the themes of the complaints we received;

Theme	Complaints Received
Leasehold services	0
Moving to a property	0
Rent or service charges	0
Occupancy rights	0
Property condition – repairs and improvements	0
Tenant behaviour	1
Estate management	1
Complaint handling	0
Compensation	0

Accepted Complaints

Of the **two** complaints received, one was partially upheld and responded to in line with Halo Housing's internal complaints policy.

There was **one** complaint received by Halo Housing that was not initially treated as a complaint, this was then referred to the Housing Ombudsman and responded to via our complaints procedure at the Ombudsman request. This complaint was not upheld.

It is important to note that not all complaints Halo Housing receive are directly from Tenants. Complaints can be submitted by family or representatives of Tenants, care providers or social workers. This is often the case due to the characteristics of our Tenants.

Themes and Trends of Complaints

The complaints (**two**) that were accepted and managed in line with Halo Housing's complaints policy had dominant themes Tenant Behaviour and Estate Management. One complaint was resolved at Stage One of the complaint's procedure and the other was escalated to Stage Two and referred to the Housing Ombudsman.

Of these complaints, one was responded to within two days and the other two complaint responses were outside the Stage 1 response requirements.

As there was a low volume of accepted complaints during this time frame it isn't possible to analyse these further without exposing the identity of the complainants.

The Housing Ombudsman

Halo Housing Association had one complaint in this reporting year that was referred to the Housing Ombudsman. The determination for this complaint found that there was no maladministration by the landlord but did find that there was a service failure in relation to the handling of the complaint.

The complaint failure order was specifically in relation to the content of a Stage One response, the Housing Ombudsman found that our response did not include;

- The complaint stage
- The definition of the complaint
- How to escalate the complaint to Stage Two if the complainant was not satisfied

The Housing Ombudsman determined that there was 'a minor failure by the landlord in the service it provided, and it did not appropriately acknowledge it and/or fully put it right.' As a result of this Halo Housing was ordered to pay a small amount of compensation to the Tenant.

From this determination Halo Housing recognise the importance of defining the nature of the complaint in their response to ensure that it meets the requirements set out in the Complaint Handling Code. Halo Housing also acknowledge that including this information enables a complainant to escalate their complaint promptly if they do not feel that their complaint has been resolved.

Following the introduction of the new Code Halo Housing have created a response template for each stage of a complaint to ensure that feedback and learning from the Housing Ombudsman is applied in practice.

Service Improvements following Complaints

Halo Housing recognise that there was a low volume of complaints received and upheld during the 2023/4 period. We recognise that this may be due to Tenants facing barriers when trying to raise a concern. We have taken action to address this moving forward by ensuring all stakeholders are aware of our Complaints policy and the process for making a complaint.

Throughout the course of the year Halo Housing have been able to identify areas of service delivery that require attention through the nature of complaints. We have acted upon this by;

- Delivering training information sessions to front line staff about Complaints and the Housing Ombudsman, its role, responsibilities and their involvement when a complaint is referred to them.
- Reviewing The Complaints Policy to ensure internal procedures meet the statutory requirements of The Complaints Handling Code.
- Ensuring the Complaints Easy Read Guide is fit for purpose.
- Adding guidance about 'how to make a complaint' to the Tenant Satisfaction Measure Surveys.
- Created a repairs workflow for The Repairs Team to establish better continuity in the approach to, and classification of repairs.

We have also recognised that there is opportunity to learn from issues that are brought to our attention but may not be logged or treated as a complaint. We have formulated a 'Continuous Improvement Log' to identify areas of learning and development to improve the service we provide.

As each complaint is received, an internal review is carried out with the aim of identifying any training needs within the organisation. We have also taken action to deliver training as a preventative measure to receiving complaints. All training is delivered in a timely fashion where there is a recognised need and Halo Housing will source training externally where the need arises.

Halo Housing have partnerships with many care providers through the collaborative approach to housing Tenants, through this we have identified ways of sharing our

learning and processes with the long-term vision that this will help support and promote a positive complaints process.

Governing Bodies Response

Halo Housing have a Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) as required under the Complaint Handling Code. The MRC is the Chairman of the Board - Martin Robinson.

An internal complaints summary is published on a quarterly basis and taken to Board to ensure all members are reliably informed of internal issues. The MRC and Board members have opportunity to scrutinise the nature of complaints impartially through this process and make recommendations with oversight of the organisation.

Board Comments

'The Board as a collective are pleased to see that the complaints self-assessment completed against the new Complaints Handling Code reveals that Halo Housing Association are wholly compliant with its requirements. It is re-assuring that the Operations Team took steps to alter internal procedures ready for the Code's introduction in April 2024.'

The volume of complaints evidenced in this report does highlight that there may have been missed opportunities to log complaints, or treat concerns in line with the Complaints Policy. However, we believe that the Operations Management Team have made substantial progress in the promotion of a positive complaints culture throughout the organisation and this has been reflected through the service improvements that have been made.'