

Annual Complaints performance

Governing body response 2023-24

Derby City Council have received and reviewed the Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2023-24, produced by Derby Homes. The Member Responsible for Complaints has also reviewed the information throughout the year provided in Derby Homes' Operational Committee reports and considered the related figures from the Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

In terms of the qualitative analysis, I commend the presentation of the summary figures included in the report. I feel this enables anyone reading the report to gain insight into how tenants feel about the approach to complaint handling, along with a thorough overview of the organisation's performance in terms of volume, meeting the Ombudsman's timescales, and the relative outcomes of all complaints.

It is clear that, given the rigorous regulatory requirements for reporting, Derby Homes has robust methods of recording and reporting in this area. The fact that complaint outcomes are analysed across service areas for trends and learning will be of value to tenants.

There is evidence of reasoning to ascertain cause where trends are found. The further contextual information on complaint refusals and the monitoring of service requests helps to paint a wider picture of how tenants are interacting with us.

I look forward to the results from other landlords being shared nationally, so we can better reflect on the meaning in terms of complaints received and where we sit in terms of perception and handling performance. However, I am pleased with the first year's figures for complaint response times for both stage one (97.4%) and stage two (93.6%) complaints.

I am satisfied that the report is fully transparent in term of including detail on Ombudsman determinations throughout the year.

The examples of learning provide evidence that Derby Homes uses feedback from complaints to reflect on their own processes and take steps to instigate changes and improvements, where possible. It is encouraging that this learning is itself evolving into an established framework for 2024/25.

Of particular note

The chart on page seven of the report demonstrates the rising demands being placed on the complaints service. It is encouraging that Derby Homes is aware of the potential reasons for this, some of which are entirely out of its control.

It was also very positive to see further examples of transparency with the evidence demonstrating timely communication to tenants on the Ombudsman's spotlight reports to show an awareness and response to the issues raised.

Self-assessment against The Complaint Handling Code

I have reviewed the self-assessment and am fully satisfied it is a true reflection of Derby Homes' approach to complaint handling.

In scrutinising the self-assessment, I have cross-referenced the statements in the evidence column against the policies held on the organisations' intranet and on its external facing website.

In addition, I have had access to relevant customer newsletters (print and email), board committee reports, and complaints staff. I have seen a sample of complaint responses and other relevant team documentation and direct communication/interaction with customers.

Further recent evidence on the organisation's positive complaint handling culture, I have seen copies of presentations and messages delivered in-person to staff briefings, which are further supported by robust training for staff and regular, internal news and updates.

Risks and learning

The self-assessment evidence refers to part of its compliance being dependent on the implementation and publishing of a new Advocacy Policy that is pending approval in June. I have every faith that Derby Homes will prioritise publishing and communication of this at the earliest opportunity.

Scrutinising the self-assessment with colleagues at the ALMO facilitated a greater understanding of the relationship between the organisation and its parent body. This led to a wider consideration of how tenants understand this complex arrangement and has kick started further work to improve how information on housing complaints is cross-referenced between the websites of both organisations. This will ensure customers are easily able to access the right information no matter which website they visit.

The published TSMs and related supporting information for the period 2023 to 2024 are available on Derby Homes' website; www.derbyhomes.org/about-us/transparency/performance/#page-1 along with **complaints performance and** any other public, non-regulatory performance information on Derby City Council or Derby Homes properties.

Charles Edwards

Director of Communities | Derby City Council