



**LACE HOUSING LIMITED**

**COMPLAINT HANDLING PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE  
IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2024/25**



## 1.0 Introduction

Our mission is to **provide and maintain a high standard of specialised housing and support services for older and vulnerable people, delivered through a strong brand, service excellence, and meaningful partnerships.**

Now in its second year, this report builds on our continued compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code by showing how we are using complaints and resident feedback to strengthen accountability, improve service delivery, and support a culture of learning.

Our complaint policy plays a key role in maintaining trust in the LACE brand and enables both frontline teams and the Board to identify opportunities for service improvement. The report outlines our statutory responsibilities as a member of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. It also presents our complaints performance data, including measures reported as part of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing.

### Response from our Board of Management.

As the Board Member Responsible for Complaints, I am pleased to open this year's Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report. We remain proud of the high standards we set for our homes and services, and the respectful, responsive relationships, our teams build with residents. A key focus this year has been expanding meaningful resident engagement meetings across our schemes. These have strengthened our culture of listening, learning and respecting the views of all residents, while giving space to explore complaint themes through wider resident feedback. Members of the Board regularly considers insights from these meetings, alongside quarterly complaint reporting.

We received four complaints and one service request, during 2024/25, all resolved at the initial stage without escalation. We upheld all complaints, and in each case, we identified some opportunities to improve. While we are encouraged by this, we know response times can improve and is a key learning and priority for the year ahead.

I welcome the launch of a new 'operational learning from complaints committee' led by our management team and bringing together voices from all frontline services. Designed to spot emerging issues early and drive continuous improvement by encouraging teams to reflect, challenge, and improve delivery of our services. With the support of this committee, we will act on and embed learning from complaints and resident feedback into everyday practices.

Carol Liggins

Member Responsible for Complaints

LACE Board of Management

## 2.0 Our responsibilities to the Housing Ombudsman Service

As a member of the [Housing Ombudsman Service](#) we have a legal duty to comply with the Complaint Handling Code which became statutory from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2024. The Code sets out clear expectations for fair, accessible, and effective complaint handling, forming part of our wider accountability to both residents and the Regulator of Social Housing.

This report fulfils our responsibility to publish an annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report, alongside a self-assessment against the Code. Our Board reviews both documents and we publish these on our website, in line with the Ombudsman's requirements.

Our Board oversees our approach to complaint handling through regular reporting and the role of the Member Responsible for Complaints. Our wider internal assurance framework, including stakeholder engagement and performance reporting, helps embed the principals of the Code. To meet the statutory requirements of the Code, this report includes the following six elements as set out by the Housing Ombudsman:

- a) The annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure our complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.
- b) A qualitative and quantitative analysis of our complaint handling performance. This includes a summary of the types of complaints we refused to accept, if applicable.
- c) Any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman, if applicable.
- d) The service improvements made because of the learning from complaints.
- e) Any annual report about our performance from the Ombudsman, if applicable; and
- f) Any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to our work.

### 3.0 Analysis of our complaint handling performance

**Table 1: The number of complaints received, per complaint stage.**

	2024/25		
	The way we did, or said something	Quality of service delivery	Communication
Complaints refused	0	0	0
Service Request	0	0	1
Stage One	2	1	1
Stage Two	0	0	0
Total	2	1	2

We did not refuse to accept any complaints during 2024/25.

A **'Service Request'** is when a customer contacts to let us know of a problem and allows us the opportunity to investigate and fix their concerns e.g. a resident contacts us requiring action from us to put something right i.e. the repair contractor did not visit as arranged. Our priority is to put things right locally and informally to reach a quick and effective solution. Service Requests are not complaints, but we log these to monitor the 'Service Request' until we reach resolution.

A complaint occurs when a customer raises dissatisfaction with our response to their 'Service Request,' or where the complainant specifically requests that their contact is logged as a complaint.

The Complaint Handling Code requires a two-stage complaint policy. We consider 'Stage One' to be a formal investigation, with 'Stage Two' being an internal review of the decision reached at 'Stage One.' For further details, please see our [Complaints and Learning Factsheet](#) or our [Complaint Policy](#).

**Table 2: The number of complaints received, per category/function.**

The table below details the complaints we recorded under our complaint policy, by department, during 2024/25 and compared to 2023/24.

	2024/25				2023/24	
	Housing	Hospitality	Grounds	Repairs	Housing	Finance
Service Request	0	0	0	1	1	0
Stage One	1	1	1	1	2	1
Stage Two	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	1	1	2	3	1

**Table 3: The % outcome of complaints (upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld\*)**

	2024/25			2023/24		
	Upheld*	Partially Upheld*	Not upheld*	Upheld*	Partially Upheld*	Not upheld*
<b>Service Request</b>	1	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Stage One</b>	4	0	0	1	1	1
<b>Stage Two</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	5	0	0	2	1	1

\* An 'upheld' complaint means we agree with the complainant i.e. we failed to deliver a service in accordance with our policies or with the intended outcomes. Partially upheld means we agree with some, but not all elements, of the complaint made. 'Not upheld' means we did not find any fault with our service delivery.

**Table 4: The % of complaints received at Stage One and resolved at Stage One**

	2024/25			2023/24	
	Successfully resolved	Progressed to Stage 2	to	Successfully resolved	Progressed to Stage 2
<b>Stage One</b>	100%	0%		100%	0%

### **Complaint performance requested by the Regulator of Social Housing**

From April 2024, the Regulator of Social Housing introduced a series of performance metrics, from both management data and resident perception. Known as Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) these assess how well social landlords are performing in key service areas. As a small provider, with fewer than 1000 homes, we are not required to submit TSM data to the Regulator. However, we do have a responsibility to publish our TSMs performance on our website. We update perception-based measures every two years in line with regulatory requirements.

The next three tables provide details of our TSMs complaint performance.

**Table 5: Complaints relative to the size of the landlord**

	2024/25			2023/24		
	No of units	Number of Complaints	No of complaints per 1000 units	No of units	Number of Complaints	No of complaints per 1000 units
<b>*Service Request</b>	444	1	2.25	372	1	2.69
<b>Stage One</b>		4	9.01		3	8.06
<b>Stage Two</b>		0	0		0	0

The TSMs do not include reporting on service requests but we include for context on our overall complaint performance. We do not view high levels of complaints as a negative but as the sign of an accessible complaints process.

**Table 6: Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales**

	2024/25		2023/24	
	Within timescale	Outside timescale	Within timescale	Outside timescale
<b>Acknowledgement (All)</b>	75%	25%	100%	0%
<b>Stage One response time</b>	75%	25%	100%	0%
<b>Stage Two response time</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

We did not meet the target timescales in two complaints during the year. In one case, we issued the acknowledgement one working day late; in another, we also issued the resolution letter one working day beyond the required timeframe.

While the delays were minimal, we recognise the importance of consistently meeting response deadlines. Improving timeliness is a key focus within our complaint performance improvement plan for 2025/26, and forms part of our broader commitment to delivering a prompt and effective complaints service.

**Table 7: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints 2024/25\***

The number of residents, who responded to our 2023/24 Tenant Satisfaction Measure resident survey, who had made a complaint in the last 12 months, who were satisfied.	44%
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In our resident perception survey conducted between January and March 2024 (\* the survey is completed once, every two years), we asked residents about their satisfaction with our approach to handling complaints, in line with the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). We recognise that high levels of satisfaction with complaint handling are difficult to achieve across the sector. According to the Regulator of Social Housing's 2023/24 report, the median satisfaction score across all landlords was 35%, making it the lowest among the TSMs. Nonetheless, we hope satisfaction with this measure will improve when we repeat the survey between December 2025 and February 2026.

We believe our continued expansion of our resident engagement programme, creating more opportunities for open dialogue, and for residents to share different views, opinions, and experiences will contribute to improving this result. Table 8 includes a summary of overall resident satisfaction recorded during the 2023/24 survey to provide further context on our performance.

**Table 8 Overall resident satisfaction with our landlord services 2024/25\***

TSM Metric	Overall satisfaction	
TP01	Overall satisfaction	93%
TP06	Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenants views and acts upon them	86%
TP07	Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them	96%
TP08	Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect	95%
TP11	Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods	92%
Theme: Keeping properties in good repair		
TP02	Satisfaction with repairs	94%
TP03	Satisfaction with the time taken to complete the most recent repair	91%
TP04	Satisfaction that the home is well maintained	96%
TP10	Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained	96%

\*The survey is completed once every two years.

### **The Housing Ombudsman Service**

Customers can refer their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service. This is generally where customers have allowed us the chance to use our two-stage complaint process but are not happy with our response. However, customers can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service for help, support and advice at any time, and in fact they strongly recommend that customers go to them for free advice rather than using solicitors.

As part of this report, we must provide a summary of any interventions by the Housing Ombudsman Service. None of our complainants asked the Ombudsman to review the outcome of our complaint investigations and we had no other interventions from the Housing Ombudsman in 2024/25 regarding complaints or our compliance with the Complaint Handling Code.

**Table 9: Housing Ombudsman performance**

	2024/25	2023/24
Number of cases logged with the Ombudsman	0	0
Cases determined	N/A	N/A
Cases upheld		
Cases not upheld		
Any complaint reports about our performance		
Complaint Handling Failure Orders		
Any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to our work.		

## 4.0 Lessons learnt

We agreed with all five complainants, that we failed to deliver a service in accordance with our policies or with our intended outcomes. Each complaint presents an opportunity to review how we deliver services and communicate with residents. We have categorised the key learning themes in the table below.

**Table 10: The main reasons for complaints during 2024/25**

The way we did or said something.
This was a factor in two of the complaints. In one case, it related to how and when we responded to a customer who raised concerns that the chips served in one of our restaurants was not too her liking. In the second, it related to how we communicated with a resident about a rechargeable repair following potential damage to our communal area.
Communication
This was a factor in two of the complaints, both relating to our repairs service. One involved the lack of timely updates and the other concerned unclear instructions issued to an external contractor, which affected the nature of the repair.
Quality of service delivery
This was a factor in one complaint and related to the standard of grounds maintenance at one of our schemes.



## 5.0 Complaint Improvement Plan

This table identifies actions to improve our complaint handling performance.

**Table 11: The complaint improvement plan for 2025/26**

Complaint Handling Performance
<p>Last year, we committed to improving our complaint performance by listening more closely to resident feedback, both through regular resident engagement meetings and by exploring our responses directly with individual complainants at the point of closure.</p> <p>We have made good progress in strengthening the resident voice through engagement meetings across our schemes. However, we acknowledge that we have not yet consistently followed up with individual complainants to understand their experience of the complaints process compared to their expectations. We recognise this as a missed opportunity to gain meaningful insight into how a complainant receives and understands our responses. This is a key focus for improvement in 2025/26. As part of this, we plan to introduce an automated text message to complainants at the conclusion of their complaint, inviting feedback on their experiences.</p>
Complaint Handling Performance
<p>With a small number of complaints received each year, it can be challenging to develop and embed the role of the Complaints Officer as a consistent part of our operational culture. To address this, we have introduced a new process to strengthen early coordination and accountability.</p> <p>From 2025/26 upon receipt of a complaint, the operational management team will meet with the Complaints Officer to not only scope the issue, but also agree an investigation framework, and set clear target dates for the return of information. Last year, we found that delays in issuing responses often stemmed from a feeling we could have done more on receipt of the complaint. By establishing shared expectations at the outset, we aim to improve both the quality and timeliness of our responses.</p> <p>As a small team, communicating timescales across the management team also helps ensure continuity in the event of unscheduled absences and supports a more resilient approach to complaint handling.</p>
Complaint Handling Performance
<p>As referenced in the narrative from the Board Member Responsible for Complaints, we established an 'operational learning from complaints committee,' meeting for the first time in June 2025. Led by our management team and involving representatives from all frontline services it plays an important role in embedding learning by identifying emerging service concerns, promoting the role of the Complaints Officer, and ensuring improvements are implemented. The committee creates space for reflective, cross-team discussion and promotes a culture of shared accountability. It will ensure that we capture lessons from complaints as well as wider resident engagement and these lessons actively influence how we deliver services.</p>

## Governance

To enhance Board oversight of the resident voice, we have now separated the role of Member Responsible for Complaints from the Board Resident Champion. This change reflects the growing focus on complaints and resident voice at a national level, and ensures both areas receive dedicated attention within our governance structure.

## Transparency and accountability

To promote a positive complaint culture and strengthen transparency, we originally intended to begin publishing quarterly complaint performance on our website starting from September 2024. However, instead we focused on the development of a new website, which will go live in late summer. The new website will support greater transparency and accountability to all stakeholders. Key performance information, including complaints data, will be clearly visible from the homepage, helping residents and stakeholders access information more easily to understand how we are performing.

## 6.0 Updates self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

Our updated self-assessment is available on our website, please [Click Here](#).