



ANNUAL COMPLAINTS EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT

2024-2025

PREPARED BY

Horton Housing Association (HHA)

Horton Housing Association (HHA) is a charitable association which provides housing related support services, training, and temporary accommodation to people in Yorkshire. There are a number of other business entities within the 'Horton Housing Group,' including Horton Housing Support Limited (HHS) and Chartford Housing Limited (CHL) who are a Registered Provider of Social Housing.

HHA is the parent body of Horton Housing Group and therefore our Complaints Policy and Procedure applies across all our services including those which are non-accommodation related.

**During 2024 to 2025 we received a total of 34 complaints.
100% of complaints were accepted and investigated.**

31 of the 34 (91%) of complaints were responded to within timescale:

- 1 complaint was late in response due to a clerical error on our part.
- 1 complaint was delayed due to non-engagement of the complainant which delayed the investigation.
- 1 complaint was emailed directly to a colleague who was on holiday at the time and therefore this delayed the complaint from being picked up.

17 of the 34 complaints were from residents living in CHL homes:

- 2 complaints related to rents and utility supplies.
- 4 complaints related to our repairs and maintenance service.
- 2 complaints related to unfair treatment due to tenancies being ended.
- 1 complaint related to (THE) arrears process and how this had been applied.
- 2 complaints related to missing property.
- 1 complaint related to property purchase and neighbour/landlord objection/not being informed.
- 5 complaints were relating to the attitude or approach of colleagues.

17 of the 34 complaints were non-accommodation related.

- 5 complaints related to quality of support.
- 6 complaints related to the attitude or approach of colleagues.
- 3 complaints were related processes e.g. bus pass application.
- 2 complaints were HR related and not related to service delivery.
- 1 complaint was in relation to a safeguarding concern.

4 of the cases (12%) of complainants were not satisfied with our reply at Stage 1 of the Complaints Policy and they asked for their complaint to be escalated to Stage 2.

Outcomes at Stage 2

All 4 of Stage 2 cases were not accommodation related complaints.

All 4 cases were not upheld.

Where complaints are support related, complainants who are not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, are able to escalate this to the relevant contract commissioning team or if accommodation related, these can be escalated to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

This information is provided to all the people who access our services and is available in our Complaints Policy, Complaints Posters, Service Handbook and Complaint Outcome responses.

None of our complaints were referred to or investigated by the Housing Ombudsman Service during 2024/25 reporting period.

Service Requests

(Where a person expressing dissatisfaction is happy for this to be resolved informally)

These varied and included: change of support worker, change of utility supplier. Some were around noise in buildings which could be quickly addressed, some were related to keeping pets and having visitors.

Service requests were mostly responded to scheme by scheme and in a solution focused way with resolutions being found or explanations of why things may not be changed or fair, and appropriate compromises being agreed. With agreement from the person making the request, these were not escalated to formal complaints.

Learning from complaints to improve services

Issue	Learning point
4 complaints were about our repairs and maintenance service. In one case a roof repair had not been categorised correctly, and the repair was delayed from being urgent to general.	This was an error on our part in terms of how the works were followed up following the initial report. The Maintenance Manger addressed this to ensure it does not happen again. The complaint was upheld and the resident was compensated.
One complaint was regarding how an issue around rent arrears had been addressed and that the housing support worker had not followed the correct process.	We recognised that by not following the correct process, the resident felt that they were being unfairly treated. This was addressed with further training for the colleagues involved and the complaint was upheld.

Issue	Learning point
<p>We received a number of complaints in relation to attitude/approach or lack of support from colleagues.</p>	<p>Some complaints were related to unrealistic expectations however in some cases, gaps in support and/or expected levels of performance were identified. We have addressed this in a number of ways including, a review of our Corporate Induction training, or where a specific issue was identified, this was addressed through individual guidance/training or in some cases our HR processes and procedures.</p>
<p>Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is excluded from our complaints policy as we deal with it under a separate ASB policy. However, there have been occasions where colleagues have acknowledged an ASB complaint by following our general complaints policy rather than our ASB policy.</p>	<p>We immediately redirected those ASB cases to be investigated/addressed by following the correct process of our ASB policy.</p> <p>We recognise that the separation of complaints in relation to service delivery and those in relation to ASB are very different. Therefore it is essential that our colleagues understand and follow the correct policies and procedures. To ensure that this is consistent and effective, we have revised our colleague guidance to include additional flowcharts of processes. We have also rolled out an additional briefing and we are planning further face-to-face briefing sessions for operational colleagues including managers and Heads of Service.</p>

Conclusions

The complaints we received covered a range of issues, however the common themes of dissatisfaction which we will attempt to resolve are mainly related to the performance of colleagues, which overall there were 11 complaints of which 5 were upheld.

Expectations of services provided and what colleagues can control can sometimes be misunderstood. For example, we cannot prevent the cost of utilities from increasing or find longer term housing as quickly as some individuals might hope for, however our role may include supporting people to budget for their utilities and to access longer term housing.

We investigated all complaints and provided clear responses to all concerns raised. We provide advice and advocacy information to all complainants to ensure that they can also seek advice and support from other appropriate agencies as required.

We are making improvements to our colleague induction and training programmes and have an ongoing programme of our Strength Based Trauma Informed training for colleagues. We also offer support and counselling for colleagues should they require this.

We have a Scrutiny Panel of people who access our services. Meetings are facilitated on a regular basis, providing opportunity for people to raise any concerns, ideas, or suggestions about the services we provide. These events also provide face-to-face contact with colleagues and members of our Board, enabling people to have their say whether positive or negative and ensure that these are acted upon.

Each service will use their own scheme evaluation of complaints and compliments as a constructive tool to support the development of their individual scheme Business Plans, and for further exploration with the people they support to look at how they can continually improve service delivery.

We welcome complaints and strive to deliver high quality services and support, so we want to know if we fall short and we're grateful for any feedback on our complaints process.

Compliments and Stakeholder Feedback

We received 432 compliments and 251 Stakeholder Satisfaction returns.

The general themes of compliments and positive feedback were:

- Quality of support
- Quality of service
- Satisfaction with repairs
- Quality of accommodation.

A number of people complimented on the support they had received with particular input and achievements, however the overarching trend and theme is that people are very happy with the support they have received.

Specific areas noted were in relation to:

- Flexibility of support
- Working above and beyond
- Helping people to be tenancy ready
- Assistance with move on and helping people to set up their own home
- **People told us that they were happy with the homes we provide and the repairs services they receive.**



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

On 10th of June the Board received:

- The 24/25 annual complaints performance and service improvement report.
- Confirmation that we are compliant with the self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024-25 (submitted online with a link to the Boards final statement)
- Assurance that our complaints Policy and Procedure for all the people who access our accommodation and training and support services, meets the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024-2025.

The Board has a Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) who provides additional assurance to the Board on the effectiveness of our complaints system. The MRC and the Board have considered and approved the self-assessment that Horton Housing Association/Chartford Housing Limited, complies with all aspects of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

Throughout the year the Board has challenged the data and information provided to the Board. Horton Housing Association Group adopts the Housing Ombudsman's definition of a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction. This gives the Board assurance that we are recording an accurate volume of complaints, as the Board does not believe that a low volume of complaints would be a positive sign. A new complaints management system is under development and due to be in operation in the near future (to be trialled during 2025-26). This will provide the Board with additional assurance on the accuracy of data on complaint handling.

We pride ourselves on continuous improvement. As a small provider owning and managing less than 1,000 homes, the Board considers a summary of each complaint, and the lessons learned from individual complaints.

Given our size, we may not have enough complaints to learn from trends, however our learning from individual complaints shows that communication is a key factor across complaints. Training, expectations, and systems have all been improved during 24/25 and will continue to improve going forward. The Board will monitor the feedback on communication through the individual complaints reported to the Board during 25/26.

Message from the Board

“We take pride in providing high quality accommodation and delivering services that the people who access them and our stakeholders, expect. We recognise that there are occasions when things go wrong and the services we provide, may not meet those expectations. We act on those.

We encourage and welcome feedback both negative and positive to ensure expectations are met or managed and this is used to help continuous service improvement across the organisation. We want to provide a positive experience for anyone who engages with our organisation and for people to feel confident to speak up or engage if this is not the case.

In addition, our ‘Scrutiny Panel’, made up of people who access our services, hold regular meetings throughout the year and across our geographical areas of service delivery. These further promote opportunities for people to raise any concerns, ideas, or suggestions about the services we provide. These events also provide an opportunity for face-to-face contact with colleagues and members of our Board enabling people to have their say, whether positive or negative and ensure that feedback is acted upon.

As part of our ongoing commitment to use complaints as a platform for service improvement, we endorse and comply with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and have returned our completed annual self-assessment. This sets out good practice for landlords to respond to complaints effectively and fairly across the services that they deliver.

Over the last 12 months (1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025), we received 34 formal complaints (17 were made by tenants and 17 non-accommodation related services) and over 430 compliments. We have taken lessons learnt from complaints and fed this into our continuous service improvement plans. We have also shared the positive feedback received.”