



ACH Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement

Report 2023-24

September 2024 Board Meeting

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on ACH complaint handling performance of the financial year 2023-24 related to the Association. As ACH has Himilo Subsidiary, any learner complaints is not included here. The focus for this report is formal complaints.

2. Background

ACH have complaint policy approved in 2021. The policy was made available on our website and HR Toolkit. The Complaints were recorded usually in Sales Force as part of the activities and the engagement of the residents as well as part of the incident reporting.

Our residents don't speak English and have cultural barriers in understanding Complaints, in some cases we are aware legitimate complaints not been raised. Since majority of our staff are front line staff visiting properties and residents regularly, we aim to deal with complaints promptly. We have security staff visiting properties outside working hours who are also reporting any safety and resident concerns.

From the Self-Assessment of the Code of the Complaint we have realized there are areas for improvement highlighted below.

3. Complaint Performance 2023-24

We have received 23 complaints in 2023/24. We have responded to 23 stage one complaints ;last financial year and two stage two complaints. There are no complaints outstanding from last financial year.

The top five causes for complaints received are:

- Repair service - 8
- Eviction – 2
- Allocation- 1
- Pest Control-7
- Council Complaints- 5 Birmingham and Wolverhampton Council have raised complaints on behalf of residents.

We have seen an increase in complaints relating to the Pest Control as this was significant issues for some properties. To address the matter we have provided remedies and also education in how residents should dispose rubbish and food items. Our residents are mainly

single people who like to get together in their living rooms and eating together. Whilst there is nothing wrong with this, consistently there have been food and rubbish left exposed which attracts pests.

In Wolverhampton, where these complaints were raised, we have produced Improvement Plan shared with the council and the residents. We have invited the council to come back and visit the properties again, and we are happy to report our Improvement Plan has been fully implemented which included staff training, restructuring of the staff responsibilities, and communications with the residents.

Birmingham Council have requested to visit some our properties following complaints raised, as part of the process we have been asked to deliver compliance certificates of the properties and interviewed residents about services provided. Subsequently, there have been minor repairs ACH needed to do. All the inspections related to the complaints have been successful and closed. Council have communicated with us they are happy with their findings and the cases are closed.

There have been repairs complaints, which the repairs team have dealt with promptly. There are two cases of which the CEO got involved and got to stage 2. Mainly the issue with these complaints have been the time taken to resolve these complaints. Further action have been taken internally to study what went wrong and how not to repeat such poor service.

4. Complaint Satisfaction

During 2023-24, we have commissioned external company to investigate resident satisfaction. Part of the customer satisfaction included Complaint Satisfaction. The surveys were conducted summer 2023, the findings are stand alone report attached with this report. The Satisfaction for complaint handling is **88%**.

The feedback from low satisfaction includes:

- “Repair had not been completed”. (Follow up work was subsequently carried).
- “Not satisfied with outcome of the complaint”
- “The manager did not contact to discuss the complaint”
- “ No one responded to my complaint”

The report from Emerge as part of our TSM Standards show strong trend of resident satisfaction with overall satisfaction of our service is above **90%**.

5. Quality Assessment of our services

ACH offices went through Quality assessments as part of the Supported Housing oversight regulations from the government. Part of the Assessment included resident interviews regarding services received including complaints. Also our Complaints framework have been reviewed.

The outcome of the assessments which were conducted for Coventry, Wolverhampton and Birmingham Council have concluded with very positive results. In Birmingham Council, we have obtained the highest award:

We are only one of six out of 200 providers in Birmingham. This shows the strong performance for our services to our residents.

6. Complaint Handling

Complaints were investigated by various managers including Office Managers, Housing and Support Manager, Health and Safety Manager and the CEO if the complaint got to level 2.

The findings of the Complaint handling include:

- Two managers handle a disproportionate number of complaints.
- Complaints are assigned to the most relevant manager, according to the nature of the complaint but is resulting in some managers handling greater volume of complaints.
- Sometimes the time taken to complete was not recorded in accordance with our published timescales.
- Investigations requiring input from contractors is one of the reason for complaints requiring additional time to complete. ACH have struggled to source suitably qualified contractors to complete the complaint within the time scale required.
- Wolverhampton Council completed an inspection in Jan-March 23 with moderate assurance given for design and substantial assurance given for effectiveness. Numerous good practice areas were noted including the Service Improvement Report

6.1 Deep Dive by the CEO

A deep dive has been carried out by the CEO in some of the formal complaints received this year:

The findings of the deep dive include:

- In two complaints, there was challenge in communications with residents taking time, subsequently managers had arranged to meet the tenants at their home to discuss the complaint further.
- In eight of the ten complaints, there was no face-to-face contact with the complainant. Managers had not arranged to meet the tenant/visit their home to discuss issues further. Letters need to be translated in own languages of the residents.
- In five complaints, the manager discussed the complaint via telephone.
- In two complaints, managers had tried to ring the tenant, however when unsuccessful there was no further follow up.
- One manager who was unable to contact the tenant on the phone sent text messages however, there was no other follow up.
- One of the complaints was about Pest Control issue which repeatedly the residents have complained about, even after ACH have invested on remedies. Since than Staff have been instructed to deliver training for residents so they are aware of the cause of the infestation.

- Some of the responses where a contractor was involved focuses on contractor as opposed to ACH as landlord as they are working on our behalf
- In the complaints reviewed there was no evidence of poor staff attitude.
- In Bristol there is resourcing issue, the Interim BPlan 2023-24 include further staffing for Bristol.

7. Actions for improvement

Process

- Complaint handling data needs to be systematically reported on Salesforce to allow for one version of the truth.
- Detailed training for all staff on complaint handling, communication, customer satisfaction to be carried out during 2024/25 to focus on consistency of required response to complaints.

Further review:

- Meet organizations achieving high levels of satisfaction for complaints, Elim, Brunel Care and Brighter places Housing Associations were identified. Identify how they're delivering strong satisfaction and what we need to change or do differently. Housing and Support Manager to meet relevant officers to take this further.
- An option to consider is commissioning an independent review of complaint handling to benefit from an external perspective of where improvements are required. We will ask DTP to conduct external validation.
- New Senior managers were appointed including IT Manager, Housing and Support Manager and Governance and Compliance Manager to bring in extra capacity, skills and Knowledge and will report to the Board regarding the performance of the complaint handling and the compliance of the code.

Repairs

- New operatives need to be introduced in Bristol and potentially Wolverhampton as in the Business Plan 2023-24.

Communication

- All communications from the website or mobile should be directly linked to Sales Force.
- Include resident satisfaction as text to the residents to capture satisfaction levels.