

## **Complaints deep dive – round up**

On 1 April 2026, 14 residents - including some who were engaging with us for the first time - joined us for a deep dive on complaints.

Attendees represented a wide mix of communities, from Independent Living to general needs residents, as well as several shared owners and leaseholders. This helped to spark a well-rounded conversation with different perspectives and experiences.

### **What did residents ask?**

Throughout the session, residents shared thoughtful questions and observations. Key themes included:

- Our complaint handling responsibilities
- Our obligations around creating equitable outcomes and access
- Our current process and approach
- Their lived experiences in using our complaints process – what was good and what could have been made easier?
- Their challenges with accessibility of the process and information
- Next steps and policy changes in preparation for the merger with Thrive Homes

These topics helped us explore how we communicate our complaints process and how we can make things clearer and more transparent for everyone.

### **Summary of issues raised**

#### **Complaints process is difficult to understand**

- Residents said the two-stage process is confusing and not everyone can easily follow it.
- The recommended improvements were to simplify the written procedure, use plain English, create an Easy-Read version and ensure consistent terminology is used across teams.

#### **Lack of visual explanations**

- Participants requested diagrams, spider diagrams, or flow charts to make the process clearer.
- The suggested policy change is to create a standard visual flow chart and include it in website pages, emails, letters, and leaflets, as well as to provide accessible and multilingual versions.

### **Confusion about change from 3 stages to 2 stages**

- Residents noted that our complaints process used to be three stages and didn't understand why it changed to two.
- To make this more transparent, the recommended improvement is to publish a clear explanation of the change, referencing Housing Ombudsman requirements with a "What's changed?" section to guidance materials.

### **Poor signposting to Housing Ombudsman (HOS) resources**

- Although support videos on complaint handling exist (including multilingual versions), residents feel they aren't easy to find or routinely shared.
- To address this, we are going to add direct links to HO videos in our complaint communications and standardise signposting across teams.

### **Need to chase for updates**

- A participant indicated frustration with having to repeatedly message for responses, and feeling communication was slow.
- We are going to reinforce mandatory update frequency (e.g., every 10 working days), develop an online complaint tracking system and train staff on proactive communication.

### **High number of new staff causing inconsistency**

- Participants highlight that many new people joining the organisation leads to a risk of inconsistency in complaint handling.
- To try and minimise the risk of inconsistency, the recommended improvement was to strengthen induction and refresher training and reinforce this by resharing our quick-reference guide for all staff managing complaints.

### **Group complaints**

- These are attributed to the person raising it and so updates are not widely shared with a block and they often take much longer to resolve if they relate to repairs.
- Adding a section into the policy for group complaints was heavily endorsed with the use of CX Feedback recommended, where possible, to provide updates to all customers.

### **Next steps**

We met with staff from Thrive Homes to make changes to both the Complaint and Compensation policies and are working on implementing the recommendations listed above.

We're grateful to everyone who attended and contributed. Your questions and suggestions help us shape improvements to our services.